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Griffith's Talkies

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VOLUME 3, NUMBER 8
POSTAGE PAID AT MONTREAL
15P. IN UNITED KINGDOM

TAKE ONE

HOWARD HAWKS

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A Selective Guide to Volume One of Take One...

No. 1 (published Sept. 1966): An interview with Alfred Hitchcock; a review of *Torn Curtain*; reviews from the Seventh Montreal International Film Festival.

No. 2 (Nov. 1966): An interview with Marshall McLuhan on cinema; Paul Krassner on "How Soft Was My Pornography"; interviews with Quebec filmmakers Arthur Lamothe and Jean-Claude Labrecque; a review of *The Wild Angels*.

No. 3 (Jan. 1967): An interview with Jean-Luc Godard; reviews of *A Fistful of Dollars, Loves of a Blonde,* and *Fahrenheit 451*.

No. 4 (April 1967): An interview with Canadian filmmaker Larry Kent; an article comparing viewers' reactions to the same news event as reported on b&w and on color tv; reviews of *Blow-Up, The Connection,* and *Chelsea Girls*.

No. 5 (June 1967): A series of articles on the Hollywood Blacklist (including personal reminiscences by Millard Lampell and Herbert Biberman); reviews of the films of Expo 67 and of *Accident, Cul-de-Sac,* and *Au Hasard Balthazar*.

No. 6 (Aug. 1967): An interview with Canadian filmmaker Don Owen; the much-reprinted (*Architectural Digest, Asahi Shimbun, Intellectual Digest)* and oft-referred-to *(Star Weekly, Playboy, Wall Street Journal, etc.)* "Intersex" article by Robert Russel; an interview with Kenneth Anger; Arthur Penn on *Bonnie and Clyde*.

No. 7 (Oct. 1967): An interview with Jean Renoir; an article on Quebec filmmaker Jean-Pierre Lefebvre; reviews of *Warrendale, Portrait of Jason, Privilege* and *The Trip*.

No. 8 (Dec. 1967): An article on Richard Lester and *How I Won The War;* a report (by Joyce Wieland) on "North America's Second All-Women Film Crew"; reviews of *The Fearless Vampire Killers, Persona,* and *The Ernie Game*.

No. 9 (April 1968): An article on Silvio Narizzano; William K. Everson on Laurel and Hardy; reviews of *The President's Analyst, In Cold Blood, The Battle of Algiers,* and *Elvira Madigan*.

No. 10 (June 1968): Alfred Hitchcock talking about some of the special effects used in *The Birds;* a report on Godard's visit to Hollywood (discussions with Sam Fuller, King Vidor, Roger Corman, and Peter Bogdanovich).

No. 11 (Sept. 1968): Analyses of film violence by Fredric Wertham and Paul Krassner; a selection from the letters of Groucho Marx; an interview with the creator of the special effects for *2001;* reviews of *Weekend, The Green Berets,* and *The Bride Wore Black*.

No. 12 (Nov. 1968): A survey of the Cuban cinema (biographies and filmographies of four major directors); some comments by Roger Corman; Mordecai Richler on writing for the movies; and a review of *Bullitt*.

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Volume 2...

No. 1 (published March 1969): Interviews with everyone involved in *Alice's Restaurant* (including Penn, Arlo, and Alice); an interview with Ingmar Bergman; a review of Godard's *One Plus One*.

No. 2 (July 1969): Interviews with Frank Zappa, Fritz Lang, and (whew) Alfred Hitchcock (the latter talking about *Rear Window*); reviews of *If, In the Year of the Pig, Teorema, Salesman*.

No. 3 (Oct. 1969): Dynamite interviews with Peter Fonda and Sam Peckinpah; Bergman interviews himself (honest!); Stan VanDerBeek writes about computer animation.

No. 4 (Jan. 1970): Part One of the edited transcript of the 1947 HUAC hearings into Communist "infiltration" of the movie industry (witnesses include Jack Warner, Ayn Rand, and Ginger Rogers' mother).

No. 5 (May 1970): Part Two of the HUAC hearings (with Dalton Trumbo, Alvah Bessie, Dore Schary, and Bertholt Brecht); an article on Roman Polanski.

No. 6 (July 1970): An interview with Jacques Tati; Joe Kane's article on B films about The Bomb; Costa-Gavras talks about *Z;* Wexler's Associate Producer on *Medium Cool* spills all the beans; a Hollywood bibliography; reviews of *Red, Goin' Down the Road,* and *Hospital*.

No. 7 (Sept. 1970): Interviews with the people involved with *American Revolution II;* an article by Mordecai Richler; a speech by FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson; reviews of *Joe* and *The Confession*.

No. 8 (Nov. 1970): Gene Phillips on homosexuality in the movies; Josef Skvorecky on the Czech New Wave; Mike Goodwin on Richard Rush.

No. 9 (Dec. 1970): Interviews with Tex Avery and John Grierson; reviews of *Ryan's Daughter, Trash,* and *City Girl*.

No. 10 (March 1971): Our Ultimate Godard issue: A long interview with Godard and Gorin; reviews of four recent Godard films; an up-to-date filmography.

No. 11 (June 1971): More Godard: photos from a notebook; a complete bibliography; reviews of three more films. Also: nice pictures of Genevieve Bujold; a short story; and reviews of *La Hora de los Hornos, Maidstone, Claire's Knee,* and *El Topo*.

No. 12 (Oct. 1971): Roger Corman is interviewed and Laszlo Kovacs is written about; reviews of *Sunday Bloody Sunday,* the Cannes Film Festival, *McCabe & Mrs. Miller,* and *Drive, He Said*.

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TAKE ONE is published bi-monthly by Unicorn Publishing Corp., Post Office Box 1778, Station B, Montreal 110, Canada. **Subscription rates:** North America, 12 issues for $4.50; Overseas, 12 issues for $6.50. Airmail: Add 30 cents per issue (North America) and 50 cents per issue (Overseas). Subscriptions sent free to individuals at prison addresses. **Notice of change of address** should include your old address on the mailing label of a recent issue; allow four weeks for processing. **Editorial information:** All manuscripts, drawings and photographs submitted must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. While the editors will take all reasonable care, they will not be held responsible for the loss of any such submissions. **Index:** This Publication is indexed in the *Canadian Periodical Index*, in the *International Index to Film Periodicals*, and in the *Multi-Media Reviews Index*. **Microfilm** editions of this magazine are available from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. Second class mail registration number 1899. Printed at Montreal, Canada.

Printed in Canada.
Issue of Nov-Dec 1971;
Published March 1, 1973.

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TALLULAH

The unique amalgam that was Tallulah Bankhead — well-brought up daughter of an old Southern family, legendary lover of both sexes, electrifying star, grand-stander par excellence — is captured in Brendan Gill's TALLULAH, a stunning tribute to a singular woman, that combines a biographical study of the actress with brief sketches of her famous friends, and hundreds of photographs, many never before published.

The 9 x 12 inch, $28.75 book, designed by Marvin Israel, contains over 300 photographs and sketches of personalities such as Katharine Hepburn, Robert Benchley, John Hay Whitney, and Marlene Dietrich which complement perfectly Mr. Gill's character study of Tallulah.

There was a public image of Tallulah that she, in part, created — an image of excesses which Mr. Gill puts in perspective in TALLULAH. He writes: "She respected and disliked the theater and gave up her life to it, but the common view, which she encouraged, was that she was somehow an undisciplined outsider, a gifted amateur, who drank too much and talked too much, and turned cartwheels on stage for want of something more professional to do. The facts were otherwise..."

Tallulah's greatest stage triumphs were as Regina Giddens in Lillian Hellman's "The Little Foxes" and as Sabrina in Thornton Wilder's "The Skin of Our Teeth." She received the New York Screen Critics Award as Best Actress in Alfred Hitchcock's "Lifeboat," and her highly successful radio program, "The Big Show," was aired for more than two years.

With Brenda Gill's TALLULAH, Miss Bankhead is once again center stage.

Published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston

TAKE ONE

The News Page

The truth 24 times per second.

Crawley Distribution in Toronto has put together **a mini-Canadian film festival**, highlighted by **The Luck of Ginger Coffey** and **The Rape of a Sweet Young Girl**. The juxtaposing of these two successful films — one English-Canadian, the other French-Canadian, one rather early in the development of the Canadian film industry, the other very recent — offers audiences the chance for a number of fruitful comparisons.

We understand that the chic Parisian lady of today, on being asked (at a dinner party or a corn-roast, say) if she would like some **butter**, will reply, "No thanks, I don't dance the tango."

A number of the publications of the **British Film Institute**, previously unavailable in the States, are now being distributed by First Media Press (1121 Carney Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202). They include titles on Wajda, Fellini, Chaplin, René Clair, Ophuls and Boetticher, as well as books dealing with the Soviet cinema, jazz in movies, film teaching, and film preservation.

A tv audience of 14,000,000 saw Fellini's **8½** recently in Italy, but — according to a network poll — an unusually low 43% of viewers reported that they liked it.

While ads for the film **Meatball** appeared inviolate in the *New York Times*, recently, the ad acceptance department of the *New York Daily News* changed the title, because of so-called obscenity connotations, to **Hamburger**. As one trade publication remarked, that's something to beef about.

The British Film Institute's **Summer School** 1973, aimed at film teachers and students, will be held 28 July through August 11 this year. The course (which costs about $100) will this year examine "Concepts in Film Criticism". For further information, you might write: Summer School Secretary, British Film Institute, 81 Dean Street, London W1V 6AA. Tell them we sent you.

To select the actress to play Daisy opposite Robert Redford's Gatsby in **The Great Gatsby**, literally hundreds of big and small names were considered. Among those who tried out for the part were Candice Bergen, Ali MacGraw and Faye Dunaway (Tuesday Weld was invited to test but refused). Then five of the men most involved sat around a table — producer David Merrick, Merrick's right-hand man Alan De Lynn, director Jack Clayton, and Paramount execs Frank Yablans and Bob Evans. Each wrote the name of his first choice on a slip of paper and when all the little papers were unravelled, Mia Farrow had the part — unanimously. Miss Farrow had had the flu when she tried out for the part — she had fainted and had had to be revived. Now the question is: Can she get it again in time for the shooting of the film?

Three anachronisms that slipped by Dean Tavoularis, the otherwise great production designer of **The Godfather**: (1) a Volkswagen — seen behind Pacino as he makes a call from a booth outside Radio City Music Hall — when the German cars had yet to arrive in the USA; (2) a "no smoking" sign — in the hospital where Brando is recovering — with the signature of the 1971 New York Fire Commissioner; and (3) a newspaper front page that includes a reference to television listings inside, well before there was such a thing.

The early winter that delayed harvesting of mid-west corn crops is expected to adversely affect **popcorn prices** this year. The 160,000 acres planted specifically for popping corn experienced unseasonal November rain and snow.

Re-releases of **Mickey Mouse** cartoons to theatres in Sweden have been given official X-ratings because of "excessive violence".

Eric Till, whose trials and tribulations were recorded in our last issue's discussion of **A Fan's Notes**, has seen his production of **La Guerre, Yes Sir** fall through. Meanwhile he's been given the assignment of directing the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's magnum opus on the building of the CPR. With Till's luck, they'll probably sell the CBC to Kinney.

Roger Corman — of all people — picked up Ingmar Bergman's most recent film, **Cries and Whispers**, for $100,000 after all the major distributors had turned it down. After rave reviews everywhere, the film grossed that much in its first two weeks in one theatre in New York and is now in such strong demand all over North America that Corman is reported to be taking as much as 90% of the gross. The picture (which has yet to open in Sweden) made more at the box-office in its first 16 days, than any previous Bergman film in the entire United States.

On the strength of that success, Corman (who made a name for himself as a director of Edgar Allan Poe-based films for American International Pictures) has negotiated a multi-picture deal with Bergman, while at the same time announcing that his company — **New World Pictures** — would soon be moving into the operation of small-town cable tv systems.

Roger's brother, Gene, meanwhile has a success with his production of **Hit Man**. It is based on the book *Jack's Return Home*, which was also the basis of **Get Carter**, starring Michael Caine and set in England. **Hit Man**, on the other hand, has a predominantly black cast and is set in California. For one week, the two films played in Toronto on a double bill, but then **Get Carter** was replaced, presumably because patrons were complaining about getting one movie for the price of two.

An association of independent filmmakers known as the Quadrant Guild (575 Madison Avenue, New York City 10022) is looking for **children's films** of any length (and on any subject, in any gauge) that they will put into distribution. Filmmakers whose work is accepted for distribution automatically become members of the Guild.

Ernest Borgnine was paid a grand total of $3000 for the role in **Marty** that won him an Academy Award as best actor.

Production Notes From All Over: Joseph E. Levine and Richard Attenborough have announced that they will co-produce a feature on the life of **Gandhi** (screenplay by Robert Bolt). Jan Troell (Swedish director of, most recently, **The Emigrants**) has been named the director of **Taylor's Bride** (based on *The Stranger*, by Lillian Ross, and starring Gene Hackman and Liv Ullman). Producer Al Ruddy has earmarked a five-million-dollar budget for his production of Ayn Rand's **Atlas Shrugged**. Toshiro Mifune is scheduled for three films this year: a Japanese historical film to be directed by Akira Kurosawa, a French-Japanese co-production about Borneo at the end of World War II, and a third film to be made in the US. Peter Bogdanovich, having completed **Paper Moon** four days under schedule, has already cast Ryan O'Neal, Cybill Shepherd, and Orson Welles in his next film, a thriller. Donald Siegel is set to direct **Seven Days to a Killing** for Universal this summer. Bernardo Bertolucci, the 31-year-old director of — most recently — **Last Tango in Paris**, is now scheduled to shoot an adaptation of Dashiell Hammett's 1929 novel, **Red Harvest**, in the States this year. Then he'll return to Italy to direct **1900**, produced by **Last Tango** producer Alberto Grimaldi. Director Francis Ford Coppola and cameraman Haskell Wexler didn't see eye-to-eye on **The Conversation** and Wilmer Butler (who did Coppola's **Rain People**) is now behind the view-finder. Stanley Kubrick's latest feature starts shooting in England this May or June, but beyond the fact that it *may* star Ryan O'Neal and Marisa Berenson (a model who had small parts in **Death in Venice** and **Cabaret**), nothing else is known about the film. Having completed work on **La Nuit Americaine** for Warner Bros., François Truffaut is now planning to take a year off, during which he will spend at least six months in the States learning English and working on several books. May is the scheduled starting date for **Bessie**, a feature on the life of Bessie Smith, "Empress of the Blues", in which Roberta Flack plays the lead. Dustin Hoffman has now joined Steve McQueen on location in Jamaica for the shooting of **Papillon**. And, before we leave you, we thought you might like to know that Monique Van Vooren has been signed for the leading role of Baroness Frankenstein in **Flesh for Frankenstein**, a film in 3-D and colour, being shot in Rome, and produced by (ready?) Carlo Ponti and Andy Warhol.

GRIFFITH'S TALKIES

By John H. Dorr

The highest expressions of truth rarely find a popular audience, for to see the truth of these expressions would radically alter one's life — and few indeed have readied themselves for such radical change. Yet, to evoke this change (to blow someone's mind) is the highest challenge and greatest joy of the artist. Few artists ever produce a work worthy of this challenge. And it is the nature of the challenge that even when such expression is achieved, it is to be recognized by only a handful.

Such is the inherent frustration of the artist who strives toward transcendence. In the cinema, where the continuance of one's career depends upon the popular acceptance of one's work, the filmmaker can rarely afford to speak so directly to so few; such films have been known to end careers. On the other hand, this is the sort of expression an artist nearing the end of his career often produces among his last work. Such a last work is D. W. Griffith's **The Struggle**.

The Struggle is a film of resignation — resignation to the difficult processes of living. As with so many of the films of John Ford and Yasujiro Ozu, forgotten emotions are invoked, and tears become possible. Griffith's love of his characters is profoundly moving. He sees the human condition with such clarity that the ridiculous merges with the sublime, immediate reality merges with timeless mythology. When the film was released in 1931, it was laughed out of the few theatres where it played; and Griffith's filmmaking career came to an end.

The factors contributing to Griffith's inability to make films after 1931 (he died in 1948) are many. Griffith's vision had long been moving in directions that seemed contrary to those of the commercial cinema. While the films he made in the late 1920's for Hollywood producer Joseph Schenck can be seen as a conscious attempt to reconcile his vision with that prevalent in the film industry (and thus to reach a wider audience), the instability of the industry during the transition to sound relegated Griffith's last three silent films (**Drums of Love, The Battle of the Sexes**, and **Lady of the Pavements**) to an immediate, though undeserved, obscurity.

Griffith was anxious to make an all-talking film. The synchronized music and sound effects that had been added to **The Battle of the Sexes** and **Lady of the Pavements** had been embarrassingly unsuccessful, even working contrary to the emotions of the visuals. Because Griffith left the synchronization of these films to the early (incompetent) sound technicians, historians have argued that Griffith was not interested in sound. On the contrary, Griffith had experimented with synchronized music and sound effects as early as 1921, in **Dream Street**. But he had found few advantages and many drawbacks to this kind of non-dialogue synchronization. After all, the silents had always been accompanied by live orchestras, and the major productions had original scores (with sound effects instructions) composed especially for these orchestras. Non-dialogue synchronization was merely "canning" of what silent films had always had "live."

The dialogue film (the all-talkie), however, was seen by Griffith as a completely new medium. He wrote (January, 1929):

> "The talking picture has ruined the silent screen for the patron. It offers so much more that the silent picture, they can no longer be satisfied with the silent ones. Some people do not like the dialogue pictures, perhaps because we have not found the true medium for dialogue yet. The pictures already made are too slow in dialogue. Imitation of stage techniques will kill the talking picture if it is continued. A new medium for dialogue must be found, and I know it will be found. I believe I know how to do it; and, in another year, I believe I will be able to demonstrate it. We must continue to use motion picture technique — the technique which has made motion pictures what they are today, and add the dialogue. When this is done successfully, you will see the greatest entertainment the world has ever witnessed. But we must preserve the speed, action, swirl, life and tempo of the modern picture today."

Griffith was not immediately allowed to demonstrate his concept of this new medium because Joseph Schenck, his producer, would not agree to any of the dialogue projects Griffith proposed. Schenck's avoidance of Griffith was in open violation of their contract, which called for Griffith to proceed immediately into another major production after the completion of **Lady of the Pavements** late in 1928. But Griffith was powerless to take any action against his producer. Griffith's reputation in Hollywood was now in almost total eclipse, and his financial situation was desperate. To risk another public industry feud (such as had ended his Paramount contract in 1925) was to exile himself from any hope of directing in Hollywood again. Griffith's only option was to come to some sort of agreement with Schenck.

While Schenck was becoming increasingly unavailable for conferences with Griffith, Griffith was independently investigating the possibility of a prestigious film about the Alamo, to be shot on location in Texas on a large budget. The story of the Alamo had been on Griffith's mind for many years and, as an action film, would have been Griffith's proof that the dialogue film did not have to be stage-bound. But Schenck was Griffith's only real hope for financing; and Schenck was interested least of all in a large budget undertaking that would not make use of his high-overhead Hollywood facilities.

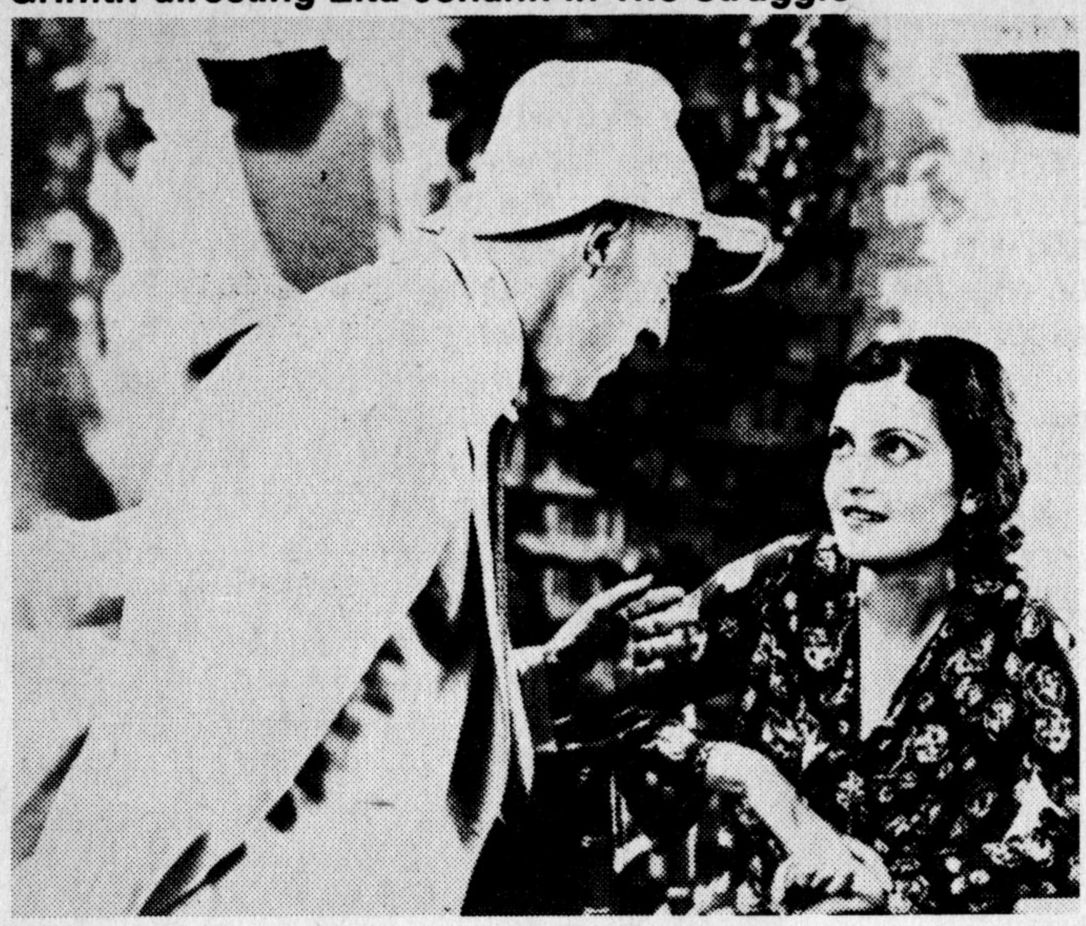
Every day of inactivity magnified Griffith's plight. Those directors who were not turning out creditable talkies were being written off by the industry as incapable of making the transition. It was not until July of 1929 that a compromise project was agreed upon. Griffith's first talkie was to be a biography of Abraham Lincoln.

Although Griffith had a great interest in Lincoln and the ideals for which he stood, a biography of an historical figure was not the sort of project best suited to his developing concept of this new medium of dialogue cinema. As a narrative, the story of Lincoln's life had no inherent suspense and little action. Nor was it possible to take great license in adapting the story, as the public was well aware of the details of Lincoln's life. Griffith was settling for a production of pre-sold respectability that nonetheless held little promise of re-establishing him as an innovator in the new medium. Ironically, Schenck had earlier turned down another of Griffith's suggested projects solely

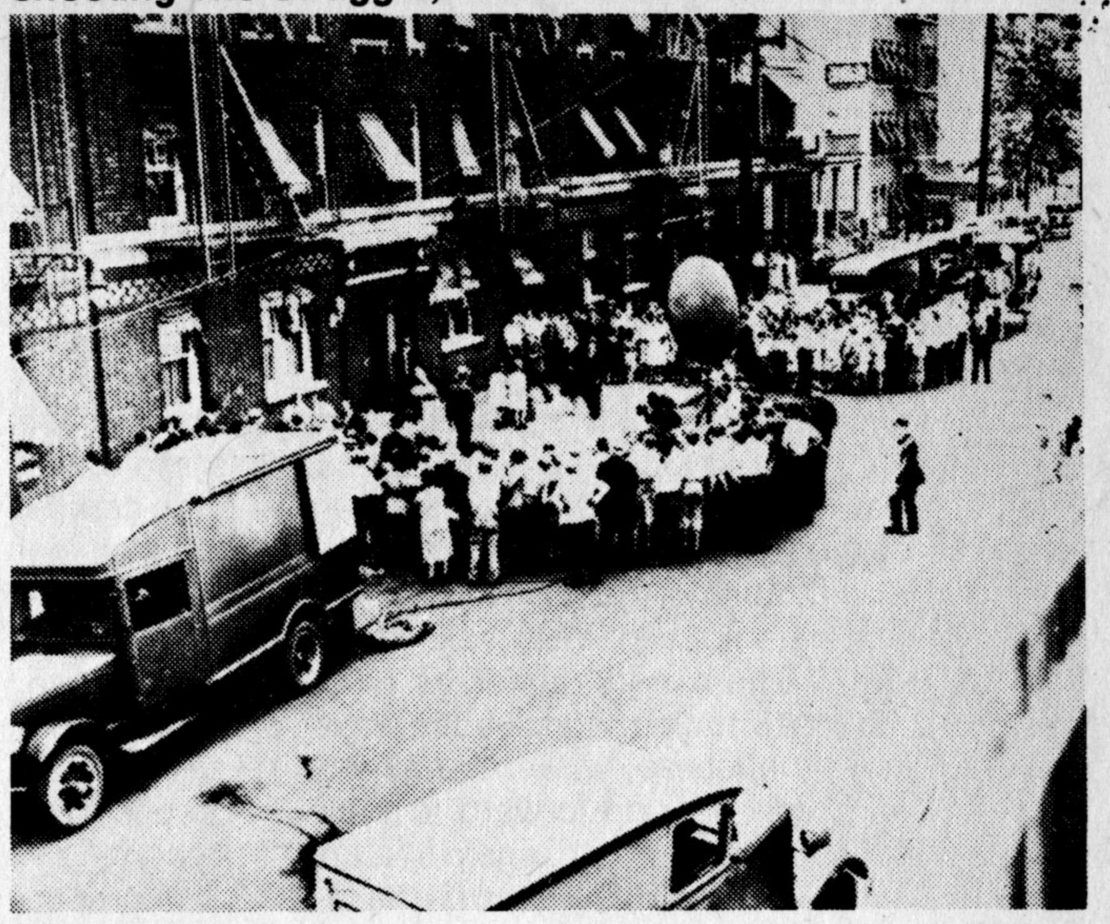
ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1930) Directed by D. W. Griffith, produced by Joseph Schenck, Art Cinema Corp.; scenario by Stephen Vincent Benet; production advisor, John W. Considine, Jr.; photographed by Karl Struss; edited by James Smith; set design by William Cameron Menzies; music arranged by Hugo Reisenfeld; costumes by Walter Israel; 10 reels. With Walter Huston, Una Merkel, Kay Hammond, E. Alyn Warren, Hobart Bosworth, Fred Warren, Henry B. Walthall, Frank Campeau, Francis Ford, Lucille La Verne, Ian Keith, Russell Simpson, Jason Robards, Jimmy Eagles.

THE STRUGGLE (1931) Directed by D. W. Griffith; produced by D. W. Griffith, Inc; released by United Artists; scenario by Anita Loos and John Emerson; photographed by Joseph Ruttenberg; edited by Barney Rogan, music arranged by Philip Scheib and D. W. Griffith; production manager, Raymond A. Klune; 9 reels. With: Hal Skelly, Zita Johann, Charlotte Wynters, Evelyn Baldwin, Jackson Halliday, Edna Hagan, Claude Cooper, Arthur Lipson, Helen Mack, Charles Richman, Scott Moore, Kate Bruce.

Griffith directing Zita Johann in The Struggle



Shooting The Struggle, N.Y.C. 1931



The evolution of Griffith's career can be seen as a microcosm of the evolution of the whole American cinema, except that Griffith moved progressively farther and farther ahead of the rest of the narrative cinema.

because it was a biography; biographies were known to be box office poison.

The resultant film, **Abraham Lincoln**, was (predictably) a respectable critical success and a box office failure. The production itself was described by Griffith as a "nightmare of mind and nerves" — as the studio executives, determined to relieve themselves from their contract with Griffith, unleashed the full pressure of committee determination on creative decisions.

The story of the machinations working against Griffith has been recorded in the letters of Stephen Vincent Benet, whom Griffith hired as scenarist. At first, Benet found Hollywood exciting; but, as script conferences advanced (or, rather, did not advance), his disgust grew. He wrote:

> "Of all the Christ-bitten places and businesses on the two hemispheres, this one is the last curly kink on the pig's tail. And that's without prejudice to D. W. Griffith. I like him and think he's good. But Jesus, the movies! Nowhere have I seen such shining waste, stupidity, and conceit as in the business and managing end of this industry."

Benet, of course, was neither the first nor the last writer to find frustration in the lengthy process of Hollywood adaptation; but later letters pinpointed "intrigues and politics" directed specifically against Griffith. Schenck wanted out of his contract. He assigned John Considine, Jr. as his production supervisor. Benet described Considine as a "son of a bitch," second only to "Old Black Joe" (Schenck) himself. Raymond Klune, then Griffith's production assistant, has confirmed that Considine worked to intimidate Griffith on every possible issue. It was evidently Considine's assignment to make the experience sufficiently unpleasant for Griffith that he would not want to finish out his five-picture contract. Considine succeeded at his job. As soon as principal photography was completed, Griffith left Hollywood, not to return.

Benet was consistently impressed by Griffith. His letters indicate that the screenplay was a close collaboration between himself and Griffith, fit, however, to the ever-changing specifications of the executives and "moneymen." Benet stated that if he were working with Griffith alone, the screenplay might be good, but that "the endless ramifications of this business will probably succeed in producing a half-baked opus." Of collaborating with Griffith, Benet wrote:

> "The work goes on, and I think we're about through, and then Mr. Griffith has a new idea. The trouble is — he is generally perfectly right. He knows his business . . . and he can produce loyalty."

Finally, the intrigues were picked up by the industry; *Variety* printed an article quoting derogatory remarks about Benet's script from Considine (the original Spiro Agnew). Benet threatened to sue, saying that Considine was trying to get to Griffith through him. Considine immediately had a retraction printed in which he praised Benet's script as the best ever written and asked Benet to work on other films. Benet flatly refused, stayed around a couple of days at Griffith's request, then left Hollywood, also not to return.

The final form of the project was contrary to the principles of narration that Griffith had spent his career developing. In a letter to Schenck, Griffith reiterated the points he had fought for, but lost:

> "I am more of the opinion than ever that had we followed the original Benet script with its subsidiary love story and not put the name of Lincoln on the marquee, we would have had a success with people of all classes and would not have hurt the main story concerning Lincoln. It would have given us some suspense as to what would have happened to at least two of our characters until the very end. The audience already knows what is going to happen to Lincoln. He alone can furnish very little suspense."

Obviously, the task of condensing the whole of Lincoln's life, including the progression of the Civil War, into a normal feature-length format was not going to be easy. Griffith had learned, from his earlier historical films, that the flow of history and historical figures is best kept in the background, while the device of audience identification is invested in fictional characters caught in this movement of history. The major interference of the studio was in the deletion of the fictional characters, thus necessitating an episodic structure of historical events. It is this episodic structure that works against Griffith's narrative instincts and denies the director the overall building of suspense and cathartic release that is the strength of his major films. **Abraham Lincoln** is a film remembered more for its moments than for its entirety.

Denied the emotional unity of an overall organic narrative, Griffith devised a complex structure of alternations and ironies to counter the potential tedium of the straight-line episodic development. An intimate triviality of Lincoln's domestic life is juxtaposed with a momentous decision of his public life, a moment of comedy with a moment of gravity, an emotion of hope with an emotion of despair. Griffith implies that the rhythms of Lincoln's public and private lives are not separate, but organically united, the one influencing the other. When the public life has come to an impasse, it is an event in the

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private life that supplies the inspiration to continue.

Thus Griffith cultivates an awareness of those rhythms of life in which positive moments evolve (quite miraculously) from negative moments. Griffith does not want simply to illustrate events of a famous life, but more importantly to establish a cohesive causal pattern to that life. Just as there are ironic forces at work in the dramatic structure influencing the emotional responses of the audience, so there are hidden forces influencing the destinies of men's lives.

The implication is that it is Lincoln's awareness of these forces, his faith in a source of meaning behind this alternation of events, that constitutes his wisdom. During one of the darkest moments of the Civil War, Lincoln assures his advisors that a victory is forthcoming because: "Before each victory, I've had a vision of a ship with white sails; and last night I again had this vision." The victory comes as Lincoln has foreseen. Of course, the alternation works both ways; and it is at the peak of Lincoln's success, when he has won re-election and his wife is excitedly looking forward to travel in Europe, that Lincoln foresees his own death, again in a dream. Accordingly, Griffith stages this moment of elation as the Lincolns are preparing for a casual night at the theatre to see *Our American Cousin*.

For **Abraham Lincoln**, Griffith abandons the strangely emotional dollies and tracking shots of his last silent films for a simplified, classical visual style. Many scenes are played in a single utilitarian camera set-up, reserving a cut in or back for special emotional emphasis. These shots are not necessarily static, but the movements are subtle and unobtrusive.

The longer takes preserve the integrity of amazingly naturalistic performances (especially from Walter Huston as Lincoln and Kay Hammond as Mary Todd) and allow us to observe the psychological depths to which these characters are realized. Griffith had been one of the few directors to insist on extensive rehearsals before his silent productions, and was thus experienced in creating organic performances directed toward the intimacy of the camera, instead of toward the proscenium arch. If the delivery of some lines is overly measured, the emotions are nonetheless deeply felt.

Most early sound productions were either broadly theatrical because of imported stage directors accustomed to advancing narration through the spoken word, or else awkwardly paced and stilted because of silent directors who knew how to create performances only through montage. Griffith escapes both these pitfalls by neither allowing the spoken words, per se, to advance his story nor fragment his actors' performances.

For by this time in his career, Griffith was no longer a montage director. Griffith's early cinema had been one of experience; now he strove for a cinema of observation. Montage and intercutting of events could induce simple emotions in an audience. More complex emotions, emotions that originated in an actor's performance, were more difficult to construct through silent techniques. In the later '20s, Griffith had found himself pushing against the limitations inherent in the silent form. In such films as **Sally of the Sawdust** and **That Royle Girl**, he had found it necessary to sacrifice coherent narration in order to fully develop character. With no story to divert their attention, the audience could concentrate on the totality of a character that was implied as the net sum of two hours of observed mannerism.

In his last silent films, Griffith had tried to integrate these more fully and naturalistically developed characters into more coherent narratives by transferring the emotions (that the actors could otherwise express only in exaggerated mannerisms) to the expressionism of the mobile camera. This solution was only partially successful as use of the moving camera again depended upon subjective experience instead of detached observation. Griffith's vision had evolved beyond the limitations of the silent medium.

Thus we begin to understand the extent to which Griffith welcomed the new medium of the dialogue film. With sound, an actor automatically took on a new reality that was not dependent on artificial devices in either acting style or camera style to establish a full psychological identity. This new "presence" caused a trauma in the Hollywood concept of narration as motivated by simple genre conventions. Either the reality of the actors took over (creating the tyranny of the star system and leaving the unreality of the stories embarrassingly evident), or else the silent directors preserved their narration at the expense of fully developed characters.

Griffith's solution to these problems of the early sound film lay in the intimacy of his camera and narration. It is the small, apparently trivial details of Lincoln's life that motivate the story. The narration is invested in the personalities of the characters. The characters do not have to tell the story through dialogue, as they themselves are the story. Because Griffith had already learned how to create full-dimensioned characters, his camera could observe the reality of these created characters instead of the eccentricities of the actors themselves.

Sound also allowed Griffith to move toward a realism of event. If the emotions of an event were completely expressed in the staging of that event, then cutting was released to express comment upon the action. Instead of the emotion of an event dictating the direction of a scene, the director was now free to comment on that emotion.

In order merely to express the emotions of a panic in a theatre in **Dream Street**, Griffith had had to construct an elaborate montage of brutal close-ups to induce the emotion in the viewer. For the assassination scene in **Abraham Lincoln**, the synchronized sound (recording the cries of panic and confusion with chilling authenticity) freed Griffith to cut back to a full shot where we observe the totality of the event. This cutback underscores the sense of irreversible loss and hopelessness.

Earlier in the assassination sequence, Griffith had used relative quiet, with only the voices of the actors performing on the stage heard faintly on the soundtrack, to creat suspense as we watch John Wilkes Booth move closer and closer toward Lincoln's box, in a variety of shots. Griffith's subsequent cut to the full shot of the theater is his release from this aural-visual tension, and leads into the concluding shots of the Lincoln Memorial, accompanied by strains of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

It is interesting to note that John Ford concludes his **Young Mr. Lincoln** (1939) with a similar fade to the Lincoln Memorial, also accompanied by "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." This scene and others, such as Lincoln's introduction to Mary Todd in which she is amused by his appearance and dancing, are clearly inspired by Griffith's film. Ford had learned his trade from Griffith, and never lost respect for his master. Mae Marsh, a favorite actress of both directors, once commented that Ford would often wonder aloud while preparing a scene how "The Genius" would have shot it.

Abraham Lincoln was properly acclaimed by the critics, and Schenck made nominal offers to finance further Griffith projects. But Griffith had taken enough harassment and did not intend to have another project compromised by studio executives. He wrote to Schenck:

> "I am firmly determined that the next story I do shall suit me from beginning to end for the reason that all my real successes, from the box office point of view and otherwise, have been made only under such conditions. Based on my past experience with your producing company, (I believe) it is impossible to get good results from a director who has to work trying to please two or three factions. No great book or play was ever written by but one man. The few exceptions where collaborations were successful . . . were only accomplished by kindred spirits."

Abraham Lincoln could easily have been Griffith's last film. Between the bad publicity surrounding the production and the commercial failure of the resulting film, Griffith had truly burnt his bridges behind him in leaving Hollywood. Nor did he have the resources to produce independently. Nonetheless, Griffith returned to New York to prepare a film that would truly

Walter Huston as Abraham Lincoln

be his own. Then came an unexpected tax refund and the possibility of making one last film, without compromise, on a very low budget ($140,000). This film was **The Struggle**.

To argue that **The Struggle** is Griffith's greatest achievement is to take battle with traditional evaluations of his work. To avoid this inevitable crime of comparison, one can more constructively argue that **The Struggle** is the purest expression of that vision toward which Griffith strove. In the rare exceptions when commercial success has not worked inversely with purity of expression, it is only because the mass consciousness has been attracted by some element of the work probably peripheral to the driving intent of the artist (the right film honoured for the wrong reasons). It is precisely because the artist eliminates these peripheral elements that the truly transcendent films so rarely find their way to universal acclaim.

So it is not surprising that **The Struggle** could find no audience in 1931. The deceptive simplicity of the film and a public overreaction to anything that could be (mis)interpreted as moralizing led critics to lament that Griffith was hopelessly "out of touch with the times."

Ironically, today, **The Struggle** seems the most relentlessly realistic reflection of those times — The Great Depression. The popular films of the early '30s strenuously avoided looking at the realities of the Depression. True, the gangster films and Busby Berkeley musicals, in their avoidance of reality, did imply certain truths about that reality. But Griffith chose to look directly at that reality of the Depression.

Essentially, **The Struggle** carries to fruition the visual and narrative solutions to the new medium of dialogue films that **Abraham Lincoln** had begun to explore. Griffith takes the idea of the natural alternation of events, and structures his narrative around a single alternation. The story traces the downward progression of a family into total despair. Then, when all hope is gone, a miracle occurs; the ending is optimistic, with the characters again able to face life. This turn of events is not the gratuitous happy ending that it seems, but rather a straightforward expression of the essentially religious experience of the negative being converted into the positive. In moving our emotions along this thin line between hope and despair, the most apparently banal images and situations in **The Struggle** hold a potential to move us to tears.

The narrative confines itself to the most private moments in the life of a very unglamorous factory worker. These scenes are almost embarrassingly intimate and must have made uncomfortable an audience accustomed to watching larger than life figures in more romantic situations. We watch a drunk and guilt-ridden father trying to maintain a face of normalcy while putting his daughter to bed, only to have the strangely knowing child insist upon his performance of a difficult series of bedtime rituals. Griffith looks with affection upon the plight of this very ordinary human being, seen at his most absurdly human, his most destructively weak. Yet we cannot really laugh at, or feel superior to, this creature because, in focusing on these very everyday problems we see too many similarities, perhaps, to ourselves.

Unlike King Vidor in **The Crowd** or Raoul Walsh in his working class films (or Griffith himself in his coldly unsympathetic treatment of the urban middle class in **The Battle of the Sexes**), here Griffith is not embittered by the hoax of the American dream. Griffith's worker is truly a victim, but has no illusions of wealth or fame. It is enough to have a wife and child to love. It is the unbearable shame of not being able to live up to the simple expectations of his family that sends the father deeper and deeper into hopelessness. And while it may appear that Griffith is breaking the old Aristotelian dramatic rule that says tragedy is only tragic if it befalls an essentially noble man, in fact Griffith is insisting that even the lowest of derelicts *is* essentially noble — and thus capable of tragedy.

Visually, **The Struggle** is simple, apparently utilitarian. Scenes are played in medium shots with a minimum of camera movement. It could be claimed that this simplicity is a response to the immobility of the early sound equipment, but it is more the logical extension of a style toward which Griffith had been moving. **The Struggle** is even more simplified than **Abraham Lincoln**, but simultaneously less stage-bound. Griffith is shooting on location in the factories, tenements and streets of New York. It is Griffith's insistence on the realism of location shooting, which earlier in his career had been interpreted variously as spectacle or exoticism, that sets a documentary-like visual tone for **The Struggle**. In photographing actor Hal Skelly at work in an authentic steel mill, Griffith was eschewing the studio editing and back projection procedures which were satisfied in creating only an illusion of unity between reality and construct.

While casting **The Struggle**, Griffith publicly expressed his conviction that "stars" were no longer appropriate in dialogue films. He was right, of course; but the myth persists

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to this day. As would follow, Hal Skelly and Zita Johann, both Broadway actors, never found extensive careers in the personality cinema of the '30s, although Zita Johann is fundamental in Howard Hawks' **Tiger Shark** (1932).

The dialogue, by Anita Loos, John Emerson, and Griffith, is naturalistic, relaxed, and free of the pregnant meaning that had been necessary in Lincoln's speeches. In **The Struggle**, there is no attempt to convey ideas through the dialogue. The talk is highly colloquial, even whimsical. The ideas of the film are inherent in the dramatic structure and conveyed in terms of emotion, not intellect.

Thus Griffith emphasizes the universal tendencies of his characters. We can identify with these simple people in a way we could not have been expected to identify with an historical figure like Lincoln. Here, Griffith's characters are simultaneously individuals and prototypes. This union is the ultimate meeting point of the two general tendencies of cinema, the synthetic (montage) and the analytic (theatrical).

Because the reality of his characters is preserved in the long takes, we suspend our disbelief and accept their individuality. Because the people in front of the camera appear not as extraordinary personalities but as very ordinary people, we become aware of the mythological basis of their actions — the fact that they are living out problems common to all humanity.

The evolution of Griffith's career can be seen as a microcosm of the evolution of the whole American cinema, except that Griffith moved progressively farther and farther ahead of the rest of the narrative cinema such that, with **The Struggle**, his vision had already eliminated that which the rest of the cinema was just coming to regard as the essence of their medium.

The montage tradition of the early silents (the first strain of the American cinema), in its concentration on classical storytelling, dealt primarily in mythology and prototype. The second strain to develop (with the moving camera and longer take), a strain which anticipated the addition of sound and was only completed with the development of talkies, concentrated on the freedom of the actors as unique individuals. In combining these two strains (giving his characters freedom in a mythological world), Griffith achieved a unified concept of cinema that was later to be termed neo-realism and which only a handful of filmmakers have achieved since.

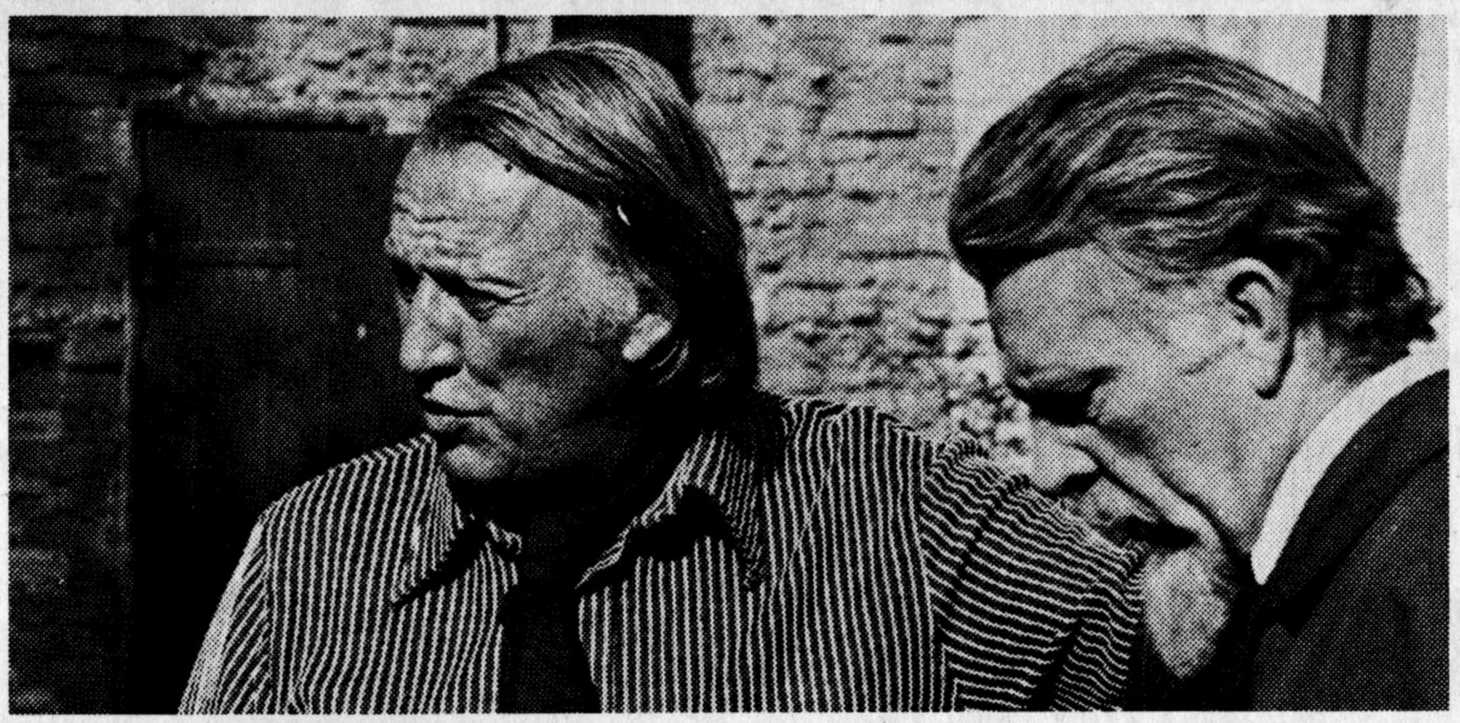
Thus comes a point at which Griffith's vision is synonymous with Rossellini's vision, Mizoguchi's vision, and the vision of all other transcendent filmmakers. In the purification and simplification of his visual style, Griffith approached that common ground of all filmmakers at which point the question of truth or illusion is no longer pertinent.

Griffith always had a high vision of the significance of the motion picture upon the flow of civilization. In his more prophetic moments he investigated such developments as wide screen, colour, three-dimensionality and television, always imagining that cinema would become both more immediate and more fully parallel to sentient experience. Movies would someday be the force to bring about world peace; it would be through this medium that all nations could see what they shared in common with all other nations — that the essential nature of all men is the same, that unity does, and thus can, exist.

It is the nature of the gift of prophecy that you can see the future but no one will believe what you see. Griffith had the hope that if he could hold a mirror up to mankind, as in **The Struggle**, man could learn to see himself, to understand his own nature and destiny — as only in a mirror can we see ourselves as part of the world around us, not separate from that world. Griffith said it would be a long time before people learned to understand in pictures. The medium continues to evolve toward Griffith's vision. END

John Dorr – a regular Take One *contributor – is a Los Angeles-based filmmaker moonlighting as a film historian.*

LOSEY & TROTSKY



Trotsky's death isn't the most obvious subject for a film reconstruction, since the exact circumstances of the murder are still surrounded by clouds of rumour and conjecture. Joseph Losey researched the subject very fully, and incorporated as many of the proven facts as possible into his last film, **The Assassination of Trotsky**. But historical reconstruction, though very important as a background, wasn't Losey's chief aim. The film allows him to present some basic information about Trotsky's life and thought to a (hopefully) large audience; it gives him the chance to relate the magnificent work of the Mexican revolutionary painters to their society; and the subject hinges on a situation already prominent in many Losey films . . . a character conflict between two extraordinary individuals. So this isn't militant, radical cinema. Rather, it's characteristic Losey cinema, with meticulous production design and shrewd choice of detail, whose basis in fact gives the action an even greater precision than you'll find elsewhere in Losey's work.

by Tony Rayns

How did the project originate?

It was not a subject I ever contemplated; in fact, when it was first proposed to me, my immediate reaction was "No, certainly not." The reason being that in my days of committed left activism in the '30s and '40s, most people of my generation who were political accepted that Trotsky was an enemy of the working class, and that Trotskyists were provocateurs. I accepted that, because I saw it in American trade unions. Later, when I became less active politically (I haven't changed my views very much, but I'm no longer a believer in organisations . . .) a man who had been black-listed in Hollywood came to me with a treatment of the subject. I said "For God's sake, are you out of your mind?" and he said "No, read it." I didn't like the screenplay, but I was shocked by how little I actually knew about Trotsky, and by how categorical my opinions had been without any justification at all. We worked on the screenplay for three or four months, without arriving at a version that was right for me as a filmmaker. But in the process of this I began to read Trotsky, and about Trotsky. I knew that in the time I had and with the kind of resources I had there was no possibility of going into a discussion of the merits or demerits of Trotsky's theory. I knew that if the film was going to be made at all, it had to be done within the circumscribed period of the last two and a half months of his life. I then took on another writer and undertook to do the project, on condition that it was shot in Mexico, which seemed to me essential. The project meant a whole confrontation with a large section of my life and my past, and the ways in which I and others had accepted a certain position.

I was also fascinated by all sorts of strange parallels and strangely apt material in Trotsky's work and life that related to my own. For instance, his writing on art and literature, his theories of how art should serve the revolution, and under what circumstances and to what degree it should be controlled and put to the service of politics. Also, whether an artist could be an activist . . . . The Communist party as well as the Trotskyist party in Mexico was largely founded by painters of world stature, both Siqueiros and Diego Rivera were founders. Rivera left the party to become a Trotskyist, but later returned. They were both mercurial, but were great painters who actively reflected the struggle that was going on in their country against American colonialism, in an agrarian society that had its parallel with the problems of the Russian revolution (contrary to Marx, the revolution was made in an essentially non-industrial society).

I still feel very strongly that the only possible ultimate solutions for the human race have to take the form of some kind of socialism. I don't believe, in the present world situation, that it is a service to make a picture that can be used purely for anti-Socialist or anti-Soviet propaganda. I was very anxious not to do that. The picture is, of course, anti-Stalinist — it has to be and should be. It is pro criticism. It is anti power-struggles within the left. It exposes the ugliness and horror of assassination as a political weapon, although I can think of circumstances in which it might be justified, but now it's indiscriminate and more and more a question of dispute within the left.

So within the brief, the budget, the confines of those two and a half months, I tried to suggest to an audience something about the work of Trotsky. Obviously I don't use only work he was doing in those last months. I cannot either dramatically or any other way make committed political expositions. But I tried to find stimulating, exciting, relevant quotes from his work. I was fascinated by the idea that Stalin and the Soviet Union (to which I had dedicated a fair share of my life) were capable of being involved in a conspiracy as sordid as this. And I was fascinated by the relationship of these two very odd men, who came on collision-course from two remote places in the world to an even remoter one — it's an incredible, improbable, impossible story, but it's true.

Do you think that the need to educate audiences about Trotsky gets in the way of your interest in the subject?

If I were simply going to make a film about an assassin and a victim, I wouldn't have gone about it in quite this way. It's important that it's Trotsky, and what Trotsky is is important. Without these things, it's not a film I would have been interested in.

Surely those four pictures at the beginning, from child to man, four or five phases in his life, each of which had importance in the world sense . . . surely the sense of Mexico, and

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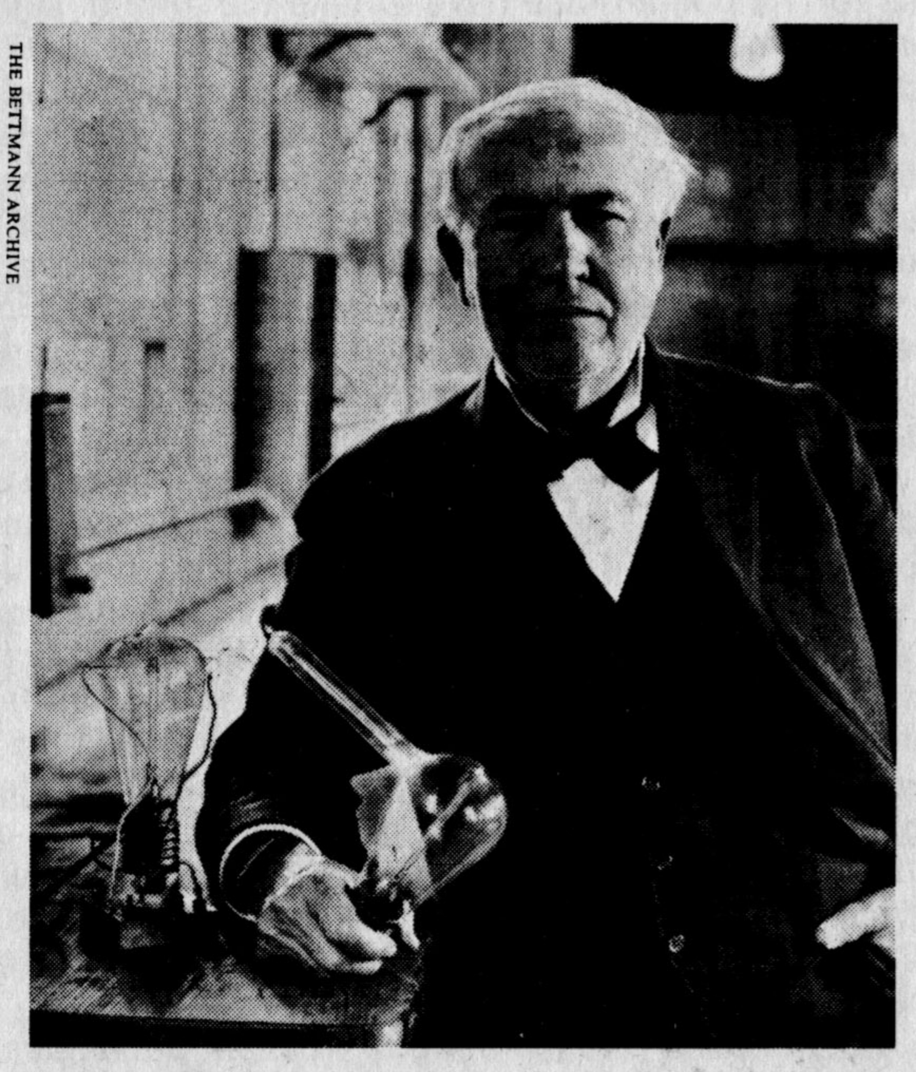

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what little is caught by the quotations (many of which are thrown away, but others, like the opening one, "A revolution only takes place when there is no other way out") .... Surely these must penetrate?

The difficulty was in falling between two stools: there was no way of providing enough information, so there is too little in a sense, but at the same time there is too much.

You haven't used any of Siqueiros' paintings in the film ....

I used Orozco's paintings and Diego Rivera's; Richard MacDonald has done some murals that I think capture the style of Siqueiros without being in any sense copies. I know Siqueiros and like him very much, and very much regret that I couldn't use his paintings because they would have served our purpose and his much better, I think. But he wouldn't allow it.

How much is known about the assassin?

He was arrested, and had a cover story which he has maintained to this day; no convincing evidence as to his identity was introduced at his trial; he was given the maximum sentence of 20 years, which he served as a model prisoner. Ten years after his trial, one of the psychiatrists who had examined him daily for two years took his fingerprint, on a hunch, to Spain, and apparently (it's contested) identified it as belonging to a man called Raymond Mercadier. If so, he was the illegitimate son of a woman of Spanish descent born in Cuba, who married a fairly wealthy middle-class Spaniard but left him and had a series of affairs; it is rumoured, not proven, that she was secretly given the Order of Lenin after Trotsky's death. On release, the assassin stayed in Cuba for six months, then went to Czechoslovakia, where I believe he now is, and to Moscow. He is a man somewhat younger than I am at this moment.

I met his cell mate, his psychiatrist, and the policeman who arrested him at the scene of the assassination. I can only tell you some of the things I had to deduce, or that were a fair premise in terms of what one had to explain. My conviction is that he was a bit of an adventurer — he was certainly getting money; he had very complex sexual problems; he was intensely vain; he probably didn't know he was going to have to do the job. It is true, as in the film, that he went into days when he wouldn't speak at all. The psychiatrists say he was a manic depressive, a neurotic not a psychotic, inordinately sensitive, particularly to any kind of physical sensation and especially pain. He was probably a trained killer, but if so then he proceeded in a way that has to mean he was asking to be stopped. He showed the weapons, he told contradictory stories, he insulted Trotsky, he committed the crime in the clumsiest possible way. It's inconceivable that he would make such a mess unless he didn't want to do it, was afraid of doing it, was trying to botch it or whatever.

His neurosis makes him almost more interesting than Trotsky ....

In his last months of life Trotsky worked constantly. He did a lot of very important work, but wasted a lot of time in polemics against unimportant people, like a playwright answering critics who've given him a bad review. He saw very few people; he lived an isolated and I should think a desperate life. He was an absolute spartan: he didn't drink or smoke, he didn't give a damn about eating, he occasionally did some mountain climbing, and he liked to garden. He adored his wife. He must have been impossible to live with, as all men of genius are, because he was totally self-centred. I tried to present some of what he thought and wrote as a kind of stimulus to what he means, and might mean to people now. But I didn't attempt to take a position controversially about his writing, because I didn't have the means to.

There is no question that he's a much maligned man and that his influence is underestimated. It's shocking he was treated in the way he was — as shocking as his death. But I believe he must have been unendurable on occasion, because of his demands, his neurasthenia and his loneliness. For a man who wasn't a man of action his life might not have been so terrible, but for the man who had been the focus for two revolutions, and who had led the Red Army, it must have been incredible. He was expelled from Norway by Quisling (who was already in the government, although this was well before Hitler), and travelled on a Norwegian freighter on which he and his wife were the only passengers; Rivera came to meet him, but Trotsky didn't spot him or anybody he knew, and refused to leave the ship, claiming there was a conspiracy to murder him. They eventually had to carry him off.

So it's a grotesque story, but it seems to me that in the film Trotsky has a number of extraordinary moments. The scene of the testament, the two or perhaps three scenes with Natalya when he expresses his love for her ("My love, my only love, my victim"), and that incredible thing at the end which is absolutely true, when he says "Don't let them undress me." And the unbelievable thing of struggling physically for nearly four minutes, before help came, with a man who was 35 years younger; at the end he said "At last it's happened." It was something that had been on his mind for 18 years. So I don't feel there's all that much imbalance.

But part of the relationship between these two men that's interesting is that they're so different.

Natalya did warn him about the assassin?

She said he shouldn't see him any more, and he replied "That man could have killed me ten times." He had the passion, which I can understand quite well, and it can be fatal, of wanting to help young people, and he also said to Natalya (I quite regret not putting this in the film), "I think he has some good instincts — perhaps he can be improved."

Why the scene at the bullfight?

Three purposes. For one, I think that people are callous about human life and cruelty, and much more concerned about man's cruelty to animals. The murder of the greatest brain of the 20th century is relatively more important than the killing of a bull. So I felt I'd get the audience knotted up about the bull so that they might feel more strongly about the ghastliness of what happened to Trotsky.

Another thing is that Mexico is in many ways a barbaric society ... it has lived through many centuries and civilisations of utter barbarity and cruelty.

The other purpose was to demonstrate the assassin's own fears and withdrawals. Plus trying to show that he had some kind of ideological drive. In the scene in the slum (which was real) he says to the girl, "Look at this — you're interested in committees, I'm interested in reality," which I thought was emotionally prepared for by the bullfight.

I also wanted to show for once the reality of a bullfight. People see them from a distance and kid themselves about finesse, choreography and skill. I wanted to make them look at every aspect of a bullfight, good and bad, in close-up, so that they would see what it meant.

The colour is very subdued ....

Richard MacDonald and I decided early that we wanted a pastel film. I'm terrified what will happen to the prints when it gets into the hands of British and American Technicolor. The first prints were Italian, and Pasquale de Santis and I worked on them for months after the film was finished to reduce colour, to take out the saturation. The palette was very carefully chosen.

It seems to me that you'll be criticised by the left for not dramatising Trotsky's ideas more ....

That's true, as a matter of fact it's already happened. But that's another film, and I couldn't make it. I don't say I'd be incapable of making it, but I wouldn't know how to finance it, or who would distribute it.

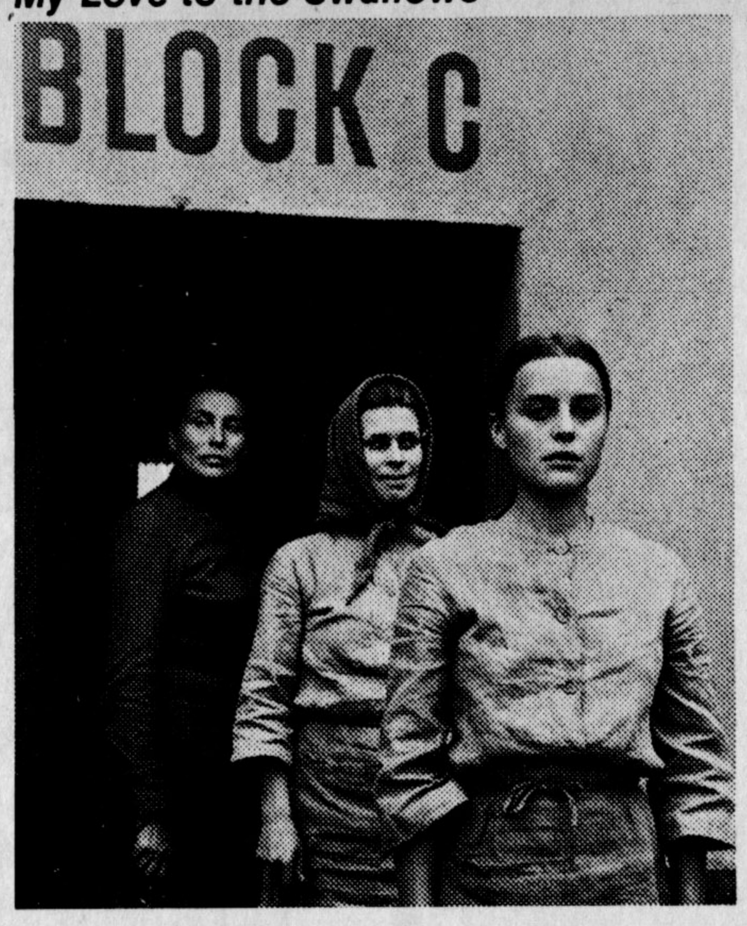
You fight the limitations as much as possible, but if you try to do something that's impossible within the limitations, then you do nothing.

END

Tony Rayns, English filmmaker and critic, was editor of the brilliant (and sorely missed) Cinema Rising. *We asked him for a brief autobiography; his response (it was London Film Festival time) was something about St. Anthony being the patron saint of swineherds and charcoal burners. Tune in next issue for further details.*

2021

My Love to the Swallows



A VIEW TO THE EAST

Returning to Karlovy Vary in Czechoslovakia for the third visit drew immediate and unfair comparisons with the brighter days of 1968 and the determined resistance of 1970: this year's festival almost seemed embarrassed to have foreign guests. The jury had only one Western member (an Italian), the French entry was three years old, and few, if any, invitations were honoured at the border — unless one entered as a paying tourist. Not surprisingly, many journalists and buyers left almost upon arrival, or after one depressing, tiresome week. Gene Moskowitz of *Variety* stayed on for the other reason foreign guests flock here: the dozen different varieties of mineral water that calmed the troubled stomachs of the Austrian monarchy. There wasn't very much else to do.

The major figures of the Czech New Wave — Evald Schorm, Jan Nemec, Vera Chytilova, Pavel Juracek, Jiri Menzel, Hynec Bocan — are silent, and most of the others — Milos Forman, Ivan Passer, Vojtech Jasny, Jan Kadar — have left to work abroad rather than submit to the ignominy of making a "party" film. A few — Jaromil Jires and Stefan Uher — have tried to walk a middle path without much success.

Jires's **My Love to the Swallows** deals with the final days in prison of a young female resistance fighter who smuggles poems and scribbled notes to the outside; it contains enough tender and romantic sequences to make the film stylistically his own. The central female figure (Jires does his best work with young female roles), Magda Vasaryova, conveys the quiet desperation of one awakening to life and relying on memories to face the uncertainties of execution. But 1943 and anti-fascist bluntness are a little out of fashion today, and seem utterly ridiculous when matched with Czech news reports that former SS men were key figures behind the Munich Olympics. So too does the omission in the biographical notes of Jires's other prison film, **The Joke** (1969), based on writer Milan Kundera's personal recollections of imprisonment under Stalinism for writing an innocent joke on a sheet of paper. Apparently, for the Czech film industry, **The Joke** doesn't exist anymore.

Uher's **If I Had a Gun** covers the same glorious resistance fight against the fascists of Slovakia, and ends with a boy secretly shooting the neighborhood Heydrich as he flees from approaching Russian soldiers. The celebration with the Russian army is a hollow ending, and Czechs said privately that no one bothers to attend this or, in fact, any other Soviet "friendship" film. The film is not as bad as I am making out on aesthetic grounds, for Uher strives to contain his story within a sketch of village customs while saluting the pride of an impoverished family holding its chin up. But Uher has already covered this same ground before in **The Organ** (1964) and **Three Daughters** (1968), both exposés of the Stalinist anti-clerical period. Uher obviously has a fondness for Slovak religious and national customs, and one of the best scenes in **If I Had a Gun** is the ceremonial burial of the boy's younger sister: it is winter, and altar boys and German soldiers try to manoeuvre a slippery hill in the cemetery. It's a nice image of Uher's own plight.

One director, another Slovak, seems to have found a way out of the difficulties that beset his colleagues, due perhaps to his professional development after the New Wave was in decline. Juraj Herz made **The Sign of the Crab** (1967) and **The Limping Devil** (1968), the first a detective film and the second a musical comedy (in which he himself plays the demon Asmodée), both commercial films that left him free of any political taint. All the while he was spending a year and a half on his favorite film to date, **The Cremator** (1969), a brilliantly executed black comedy equating the mentality of the owner of a crematorium (Rudolf Hrusinsky in one of his best roles) with the mechanics of fascist thinking. Far from being a diatribe on Nazism, it explores the bourgeois subculture and roots of fascist thinking, thereby casting the result into a form of universal parable on the age.

At the last Karlovy Vary festival Herz's **The Sweet Games of Last Summer** (1970), based on Maupassant's *Mouche,* was bypassed for attention because it was made for Slovak television, but it won attention at international festivals for its remarkable evocation of *belle epoque* atmosphere and the debut of Jana Plictova in the role of the laundry girl. (Young, long-suffering females seem to be a symbol of national calamity at present.) Only Renoir has made a better Maupassant, and **Sweet Games** has the dubious distinction of being dubbed into French for French audiences. Atmosphere is Herz's hallmark: from the delicate, richly coloured, impressionistic Maupassant he turned next to Art Nouveau patterns for **The Petro Lamps** (1971) and his newest, **Morgiana**.

Petro Lamps opens on the New Year's celebration for 1900 and matches the love affair of a female outsider with the gradual disintegration of her lover, an Austrian army officer, by syphilis. The film's mood is catching, moves with the same nervous pace that characterizes all Herz's material, and introduces another wistful, melancholic and engaging young actress, Dodo Simoncic. She appears in a double role in **Morgiana**, the good and bad sister in a suspense thriller involving sexual frustrations, a sinister cat, a vial of poison, and a rich decor of turn-of-the-century Austrian *Jugendstil*. In Herz's half-real, half-dream world of hope and despair, the photography, decor, music and cutting are fused into one act of directing, and reflect an obsession with black comedy and opulent decadence. How long he will be allowed to continue in the genre of the entertainment movie is open to question, but right now he is the only artist working freely in Czechoslovia worthy of the name.

Karlovy Vary is hardly the place to look for the latest trends in contemporary cinema, particularly from the West. But it is a very good station on which to tune in the latest signals from the East. The best of the Eastern fare in competition was, not surprisingly, an Hungarian film, Istvan Gaal's **Dead Landscape**, a far-reaching parable on abandonment of rural villages that speaks of the agonies of today's changing industrial society. What did surprise, however, was the first break from stolid, heavy, didactic East

By Ron Holloway

German cinema: Egon Günther's **The Third**, for the first time in my recollection, tells a great deal about the hardships of finding and keeping a measure of happiness amid socialist emphasis on equality and emancipation. Both Gaal's and Günther's films reveal a humanistic segment of socialist living, comment on the prevalence of ambition and greed, and ask difficult and puzzling questions.

It does not take long to realize that Istvan Gaal is the most remarkable figure in New Hungarian Cinema. He first achieved an international reputation at the 1971 Cannes festival, where he received the Director's Prize for **The Falcons** and demonstrated the truth of the saying that a filmmaker's style is in harmony with his personality. Gaal is an austere and uncompromising young man who manages to imbue his films with several layers of meaning; they are parables offering insights, sensitivity and compassion for the multiplicity of human

If I had a Gun

The Third Dead Landscape

and social relationships. **The Falcons** is a mature work along harsh and simple lines, about a youth who visits a settlement for the training of falcons and leaves horrified by the inhuman, authoritarian methods used to train birds to kill.

Anti-humanism masquerading as revolutionary zeal was the subject of a former Gaal film, **The Green Years** (1965) in which a young man comes from the village to the university in the Rakosi period, and recognizes the inherent conflicts between the old world and the new, between past and present, between a sense for life and a sense for destructive power. In **Dead Landscape** the theme of the conflict between the individual and the community, painted in broad colors in **The Falcons**, is reduced to an abandoned village, a microcosm of distorted human relationships in which solitude and isolation between a young married couple (clinging to feudal ideals of the past) gradually leads to tragedy: the unexpected death of the wife. The fullness of this bare psychological and social drama is rendered in the extraordinary performance of Mari Torocsik (Acting Award at Karlovy Vary and acclaimed at last year's Cannes festival for her role as the wife of the political prisoner in Karoly Makk's **Love**); without her this abstract parable would be considerably weakened. Remarkable too are the colour tones of the film (the autumn landscape is breathtaking), Gaal's deft sense of timing and atmosphere, and his attention to the rightness of image. Not without reason, Gaal confesses to a liking for the austerity of Dreyer and Bergman. He is probably closer to Dreyer: "Let us say that I breathe like him; I am fascinated by his sense of rhythm of a film or sequence."

Egon Günther's **The Third** is extremely important for its honest approach to a current theme: the difficulties of an emancipated woman in the professional world in handling her love life with the same assurance. The heroine has lost her mother at a young age (in a fast-motion sequence the bed is stripped clean by relatives before the body is cold), suffered through two unlucky love affairs leaving a pair of children, and is determined not to bow to the demands of the technical revolution (she works at a computer) without making one more determined effort to marry the man of her choice. The rest is a bitter-sweet, comical and cheering love story that mixes poignant moments of sadness and boredom with a variety of tickling situations.

The raw courage and adventure of this film can only be judged in relation to the rareness of such themes in the East, and especially East Germany: it is tenderly human and fresh (the husband dozes off to sleep in the middle of the wedding celebration), and whoever heard of a Prussian comedy? Both Günther and his scriptwriter, Günter Rücker, have a special interest in films with modern themes, and between them have made nearly all the important ones in East Germany. Rücker in an interview: "Questions shouldn't be given an easier answer than the one reality provides. I think that the rediscovery of a realistic method of telling a story is of the utmost importance. I have tried to tell the story with humour but also with the hardness of life. Great beauty can also lie in this."

The Soviet entry at Karlovy Vary was **The Taming of Fire**, directed and scripted by Daniil Khrabrovitsky who scripted Chukhrai's **Clear Skies** (1961). It is another history of aviation (jet engineering), modelled to the personal vision of the hero (chief designer of rockets) representing the collective image of Soviet space scientists. Matched with this rather conventional, but solid piece of technical workmanship (the aerial shots are done by Sergei Vronsky, a pilot-cameraman), Andrei Tarkovsky's **Solaris** (shown in the information section) seemed even more drawn out and

meditative than at the first screening in Cannes. But the presence of these two films together at the same festival, a commercial and intellectual weighing of the same subject matter, offers some meat for reflection. **The Taming of Fire** won the Grand Prize: one wonders what the impact would have been if **Solaris** had been entered in competition instead! The presence of Tarkovsky working again after the debacle of **Andrei Rublov** a few years ago can only be interpreted as an encouraging sign.

Although Cuba is not the East, the table arrangement at Karlovy Vary places its delegation squarely between the Russians and the Americans, and amusing jokes pass about straddling the line. Tomas Gutierrez Alea's latest film, **A Cuban Fights Against Demons**, differs from his humorous and biting attack on bureaucracy in **Death of a Bureaucrat** (1967) and his contrasting of the ideals of the revolution with the legacy of the bourgeois mentality in **Memories of Underdevelopment** (1968), but the material is just about the same: it questions the social and moral forces that have held his country back from attaining a pure revolution that will allow Cuba to become the final master of its own destiny.

In each of these films (and three others before them) the questions remain the same and only the style is different. Alea employs a large measure of improvisation in **A Cuban Fights Against Demons**, set in the 17th century at the beginning of the New World. Alea's symbols are difficult to separate, as are the numerous clashes between indistinguishable marauding bands. Exactly who the demons are is never stated, but the priest constantly proclaiming the presence of Satan in the village is in direct conflict with the visions of a revolutionary Cuban freethinker. As usual, neither party wins; but these were apparently the first authentically recorded skirmishes against the powers of church and state in the country's history. The style of the film is the puzzling factor: the influence of the Brazilian Cinema Novo directors — superstitious rituals, blood-baths, and a perpetually moving camera — is clear. But Alea may have made this intentional as a sign of unity. South American cinema has a large, appreciative audience in Europe, perhaps more in the West than the East. And Cuban films rank high as speculative treatises on revolutionary theory.

The charm of Karlovy Vary, it can be contended, is not the main competition program, with its regular fanfare of delegates descending a broad staircase, introduced by a model in alternating wig and evening gown, followed by a speech by the head of the delegation, followed by the model's pre-arranged and usually inaccurate translation, after which the delegates take their seats ... to watch a musical fanfare trailer announcing the KV festival, and finally the main attraction itself. (The Mexican ambassador, or whoever he was, stole the show one evening with an arm-swinging, boisterous demonstration of old-time political stumping: a refreshing breeze before ennui set in again.) The fascinating element is the film market, the variety of small and large screening rooms scattered around the hotels in the area showing private little tidbits for (mostly) television buyers who traditionally do much of their business either at Karlovy Vary or the autumn Brno Film Forum. If you could wrangle an invitation, that's where the action was — not in the late evening receptions or outdoor barbeques for the prospective winners.

In a small screening room in the rear of the Pupp Hotel I saw Mike Leigh's **Bleak Moments** (England), a simple, unassuming debut film about young people trying to communicate, the agony of finding words to fit the right occasions, the embarrassments of speaking their thoughts: soundly real, human, funny, painful, tragic. A few weeks later, **Bleak Moments** won the Grand Prize at Locarno; Leigh seems to be the best in this genre since ... well, since Milos Forman.

END

Ronald Holloway, a regular Take One *contributor from Eastern Europe, is the author of the Tantivy-Barnes book* Z Is For Zagreb.

He wrote a letter to a friend, and they sent him to prison for five years.

He is Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a graduate of the Soviet's most elite secret prisons.

He writes novels—shocking, brutal, epic novels.

The world describes him as the living Tolstoy.

But the Soviet Union calls him something else.

They ban his books. Denounce him. Persecute him. Even though he won The Nobel Prize for literature.

One of his most shattering novels is THE FIRST CIRCLE, a macabre vision of a twentieth century inferno. It is the story of the men and women who discover that Hell is alive and burning fiercely. Here the innocent are incarcerated to live the outrages of the condemned.

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COMING SOON TO A THEATRE NEAR YOU

An interview with HOWARD HAWKS

by Michael Goodwin and Naomi Wise

Howard Hawks was coming to the San Francisco Film Festival!

I was panic stricken.

I stand in utter awe of Howard Hawks — more so than of any other American filmmaker. I've seen nearly every one of his films, most of them three or four times. I've spent hours and hours rapping about them, and him. I've become a bore on the subject of Howard Hawks.

What could I say to him?

I asked Naomi Wise (another Hawks freak) and Mike Shedlin to accompany me. I pestered the Festival staff endlessly. Yes, they'd tell Hawks we wanted to do a private interview backstage. Yes, they thought he'd do it. Time grew short, and I grew increasingly panicky.

October 15th. H Day.

For openers, there were seven hours of film clips, including two complete (rare) Hawks silents. Then there was about 30 minutes of audience Q&A (which is transcribed below), and Hawks left the stage. Mike, Naomi and I ducked through a gap in the curtain and rushed backstage to the VIP lounge. Three years of saved up questions, no notes, Howard Hawks.

It's hardly a definitive interview, although I tried to touch all the bases, and ask all the important questions. I had barely made a start when the interview was over. We had talked for nearly an hour.

AUDIENCE Q&A

Q: Is it true that you, rather than Christian Nyby, directed ***The Thing****?*

HAWKS: I was the producer, and in charge of casting. Chris had been my cutter, and I thought he deserved a chance to direct. He did direct it. I thought he did an awfully good job, and should have credit for it.

Q: There's a certain universality to the character of Tony in ***Scarface*** *that reminds me of Macbeth. Yet while Macbeth may not be taken as social criticism, your film seems aimed in that direction.*

HAWKS: I don't think I've ever tried to get my nose into social criticism or anything. We had a very simple idea in making **Scarface**. I asked Ben Hecht whether he'd like to do a gangster picture, and he said, "My Lord, you don't want to do one of those!" I said, "Well, I've got an idea that the Borgia family is alive in Chicago today, and Caesar Borgia is Al Capone." He said, "We'll start tomorrow morning."

We wrote the script in about 11 days, and wrote it for sheer entertainment. We had darn good sources of information about how things happened. Gangsters would come in and say, "Do you want to know how such a killing was done?" I'd say, "I'd love to know, thanks," and we'd do it that way. There wasn't any idea of having any social significance at all.

Q: Was the sequence with the newspaper editor originally in the script?

HAWKS: Oh Lord no! The censors were very much in control at that time, and the picture wasn't released for a year and a half after we made it. Then they insisted that we put that sequence in, and that I write it. I said, "I won't have anything to do with a bunch of junk like that," so somebody else made it. We may release **Scarface** again, and I assure you that that won't be in it.

Q: Orson Welles claims to have contributed a great deal to the script of ***I Was A Male War Bride****. Is that true?*

HAWKS: I have no knowledge of any contribution that Orson made. As a matter of fact, the first script that I read was a horrible thing. I started talking about how bad it was, and Joe Schenck, the head of 20th Century Fox, came up and said, "You started working for Fox this morning." I said, "I don't want to." He said, "Well, you can pay back some of the things I've done for you." So we completely rewrote the whole script, and I never saw Orson during that time, so I don't think he had anything to do with the final picture.

Q: Why do you think gangster pictures were so popular in the '30s, and why were the censors so outraged?

Scarface

One time this gangster showed up and wanted to come onto the set. I said sure. So he came in, and he said, "Why doesn't *Scarface* play in Chicago?" I said "They won't let us." He said, "Can I use your phone?" He made a call, and the next day we had permission to play in Chicago.

HAWKS: I don't know, I haven't any idea. I do remember one time when this gangster showed up with two very attractive daughters, and wanted to come onto the set. I said sure. So he came in, and he said, "Where did you find out about these certain things?" I said, "Are you angry?" He said, "No, I'm just curious," so I told him. Then he said, "Why doesn't **Scarface** play in Chicago?" I said, "They won't let us." He said, "Can I use your phone?" He made a call, and the next day we had permission to play in Chicago.

Q: Perhaps it had something to do with the feeling that

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Some of Bacall's best lines in *To Have and Have Not* don't match her lips at all, because I thought of them after the picture was all over.

gangsters were being given an heroic image. People like James Cagney and George Raft were given the image of being nice guys who, because of the Depression, couldn't get jobs, so ....

HAWKS: I'm sure that had something to do with it. Hecht and I really tried to give a true picture of .... Capone was a horrible man.

Q: What was Paul Muni like?

HAWKS: Paul is a great actor. He's one of the real actors' actors that I've worked with. I usually like to work with a personality rather than an actor. Muni had to hit somebody in the picture. He's a sedentary man who had never had much to do with violence, so it was very interesting the way he did it. I got a prizefighter friend of mine, and I said, "I want you to work with Muni for two or three weeks, but always put up your hand and take the blow. Then, when we make the scene, leave your hand down and get hit." He said OK, and when we shot the scene Muni hit him and knocked him right over a table. Muni stood there, horrified at what had happened, and I said, "Act, you so-and-so, act!" and he went on acting. The same thing happened when he shoved a machine gun through a glass window — he cut himself and was horrified looking at the cut. I had to yell at him, "Act!" and he acted. He was a great actor, really.

*Q: Don't you think that **Scarface** glorifies gangsters?*

HAWKS: Lord, he ended up in the filth and the gutter. The only time he was glorified, or the censors *thought* he was glorified, was the ending, so they made me show him being hanged. The only trouble was that I didn't have Muni — so I had to show feet and ropes. Finally we took that out and went back to the original ending. It certainly wasn't our idea to glorify him.

*Q: Why did you put the X's in the murder scenes in **Scarface**?*

HAWKS: Every newspaper would say, "X marks the spot" where somebody was killed, and I thought it was kinda fun to do it. Any member of the crew who suggested an X that we used got $100, so we had a lot of good things to choose from. Incidentally, I was the man in his underwear on the bed with my hands stretched out so I could be an X on the bed.

Q: Did Muni work out his own gestures and intonations?

HAWKS: Well, he wasn't coached by me — 'cause I can't act worth a darn. He got a very good Italian, and just kept him around doing things. The Italian didn't know that Muni was learning how to talk the way he did.

*Q: I read that in **His Girl Friday** you had the actors speak at the rate of 240 words a minute. Why?*

HAWKS: That isn't true at all. You get the sensation of speed only because they spoke while another person was talking. I purposely gave each man a few words that weren't necessary at the beginning and end of his lines so somebody could cut over, because I've never heard a conversation between four people when three weren't talking at the same time. I thought it'd be fun to try it.

*Q: Was there a lot of ad libbing in **His Girl Friday**?*

HAWKS: There is in every picture that's any good. You write a story up in a room. With a good actor, the thing comes alive when you get to a set. The actor contributes things, and you think of things for the actor to do — some of the best lines come then, or after you finish the picture. Some of Bacall's best lines in **To Have and Have Not** don't match her lips at all, because I thought of them after the picture was all over.

Q: How did you get Bacall to have that voice?

To Have & Have Not

HAWKS: I told her what Walter Huston (who is one of the greatest actors I've ever seen) did to get his voice. Huston told me that he learned to talk from the stomach by reciting his lines to a tree 125 feet away. By doing that he was able to be heard — he could speak quietly and still be heard. So I told Bacall. She came in three weeks later talking like a bass singer, and we put her in the picture. Originally, she'd had a high, nasal voice, and she couldn't possibly have read the lines that we had in the picture with that voice. She had to keep working all during the movie, and after the movie, but she never stopped until that voice became perfectly natural.

Q: What was it like working with Bacall and Bogart on that film?

HAWKS: It was pretty easy, because Bogart fell in love with Bacall during making the picture, and I didn't have to ask them many times to do anything.

*Q: Tell us something about the atmosphere on **20th Century** — putting it together with Carole Lombard and John Barrymore.*

HAWKS: The scene you saw Carole Lombard do [during the film clips; the famous scene on the train where Jaffe tries to woo Lily Garland back to the theatrical fold with his plan for a spectacular production of the Passion Play — camels, sand from the holy land, and Lily as Mary Magdalene. She laughs, tries to kick him in the stomach, and drives him from her compartment.] was the first scene she had ever done in a picture. She rehearsed, and tried to act; Barrymore started holding his nose where she couldn't see him. I had to go up to him and say, "Look, until four o'clock in the afternoon I don't want to hear a peep out of you. After that you can say anything you want."

I took Carole out, and told her she was doing very well — she knew all her lines. I asked her how much she was getting paid, and she told me. I said, "That's pretty good. What are you getting paid *for*?" She said, "Well, acting of course." I said, "You've earned all that money today, and I don't want any more acting."

I knew Carole pretty well — we both came from the same little town in Wisconsin, and I think she was a second cousin of mine. I said, "Carole, what would you do if a man said such and such to you?" She said, "I'd kick him right in the ...." I said, "Well, you didn't kick Barrymore." She just stared at me. I said, "What would you do if a man said ...." She made a typical Lombard gesture. I said, "Why didn't you wave your arm like that? Look, you go back in there and forget about acting. Kick him right where you said you were going to, do anything you want to — just don't act any more!" She said, "You're serious, aren't you?" I said, "If you *don't* do it I'm gonna fire you."

So we went back, and I said, "Let's try a take." Barrymore said, "We're not ready." I said, "Who's boss?" He said, "You are." We started the scene, he read his line, she made a kick at him, he started to dance around, she kept on waving

her arms and kicking him — and that was the first and only take, the one that you saw. We had three or four cameras on, because I didn't know what was gonna happen.

Barrymore made his exit, came back and said to Lombard, "That was so perfect, that was marvelous, have you been kidding me all this time?" She burst into tears and ran off the stage. He turned to me and said, "What the hell is going on here?" I told him, and he said, "The girl is simply marvelous, she's a star, she's a cinch to be a star," and I said, "OK, then you've got to help." We made the picture in three weeks. Those two people — all I had to do was turn 'em loose. Have I answered the question?

Q: Cary Grant seems to find himself in women's clothing several times in your films. How did that come about?

HAWKS: I don't know, I think he's funny in women's clothes because he doesn't try to be at all feminine. He just proceeds the way he is: disgusted with himself. I think Cary is funny when he's disgusted — that was the only reason for doing it.

Q: What were the preparations for the scene in ***Male War Bride*** *where he had to dress up as a WAC to get on the ship?*

HAWKS: Cary started out thinking it would be good if he acted rather effeminate. We argued quite a bit, and I didn't seem to be winning. We were in Germany, and some general was giving a party, so I borrowed a WAC's uniform and put on a red wig, with my legs, and Cary started to laugh right away. I went up to the general and got a cigar, and Cary came over to me and said, "You can take those damn things off, because I'm sold." The only thing he didn't quite like was making a wig out of a horse's tail.

Q: How was Hepburn to work with in ***Bringing Up Baby****?*

HAWKS: She's great, a great actress. She was very ill at ease in the beginning, because she had never played comedy. The fellow who played the constable, Walter Kaplan, was an old Ziegfield comic, and when I couldn't get through to Katherine I'd go over to Walter and say, "Would you show Miss Hepburn what I mean?" He said, "I don't think I want to do that." So I went over to Katie and said, "I think it'd be a good idea if you asked Walter Kaplan." She learned quicker than anybody — and by the time she finished the picture she was a marvelous comedienne.

Q: Did you have much trouble with the leopard?

HAWKS: More than any other actor I've ever worked with. If that leopard came into a set and moved a certain way, we had to rebuild everything because he was gonna keep on doing it that way. We had two or three leopards, but even the tamest one wasn't any fun. We had electricians that when somebody would yell, "The leopard's loose," would go right through the canvas tent.

Q: What was it like working with Gary Cooper and John Wayne?

Red River

HAWKS: Working with Cooper was always a joy. The only time I had any worries was because I was afraid he wasn't *doing* anything — he was so quiet. Then the next day I'd see the scene, and everything I wanted was there. He had an amazing quality of making other actors work with him. We made a comedy that was fun, **Ball of Fire**.

Wayne is an entirely different thing. He has more power than any other man on the screen. The only problem with Wayne is who do you get to play with him? If you get somebody who's not pretty strong, why he blows them right off the screen. He doesn't do it purposely — that's just what happens.

In **Red River** he had Montgomery Clift, who was a pretty fair hand. In **Rio Bravo** he had Dean Martin. Bob Mitchum in **El Dorado**. I made a couple of films that I didn't think were too good — **Hatari!** and **Rio Lobo** — because he didn't have anybody to buck up against, he didn't have anybody to keep him going.

Q: How did you get Clift to give such an amazing performance in ***Red River****, his first film?*

HAWKS: He came down three weeks ahead of time. He would go out around five in the morning and come back around eight at night — like a good cowboy — and all he did was ride, up hill, down hill, through water, on and off horses. I taught him a little jump to get on a horse. He really worked his head off.

He had a lot of . . . I don't know, actors' lab ideas that Wayne and I cured him of. I thought he was just great to work with. He was so appreciative. I remember one time he told me, "I have a great scene to do tomorrow," and it was a scene where he went up to Wayne, who was leaning over the saddle of a horse, and said to Wayne, "I'll get your cattle to Abilene," and Wayne said, "I'm gonna kill you."

Monty thought he had a great scene, but Wayne never looked at him or anything — he just looked off and said, "I'm gonna kill you." Monty didn't know what to do. Finally he got out of the scene and came around to me and said, "My good scene certainly went to the devil, didn't it?" I said, "Anytime you think you're gonna make Wayne look bad, you've got another thing coming." But Monty learned so quickly, and took advice so well — he was really a joy to work with.

Q: The women characters in your films are usually strong-willed and independent. In light of this, do you have any thoughts on the recent Women's Liberation movement?

HAWKS: That happens to be the kind of girl I like, so it's fun to work with 'em. I know 'em better. You might term them honest and direct.

Q: They're all very liberated women. Have you been keeping up with these things, the women's movement?

HAWKS: I haven't thought too much about the movement, mostly because the people who seem to be doing most of the talking are so unattractive that I don't think it's fun. The kind of women that I use are just honest. The men I like are not very talkative, so the woman has to do a little about the thing. Also it comes from the fact that I hate those romantic love scenes with moonlight on the water behind them and all that.

Q: Do you have any current projects?

HAWKS: The new one is just as crazy as **Bringing Up Baby**. It's a little like **A Girl In Every Port** — it deals with two friends — except that I've learned a little since then. One man is always ahead of another. Finally they meet each other, become good friends, and then one fellow falls for a girl and it turns out to be the ex-wife of the other one. We just go into the same story, but we have more fun with it. It's full of crazy, wild schemes.

Q: Peter Bogdanovich has used your films as kind of a running theme in his own films – particularly in ***Last Picture Show****, where he used a clip from* ***Red River****, and* ***What's Up Doc?*** *What's your reaction to that?*

HAWKS: Peter is sort of a protégé of mine. He sat on the set for about two years, watching and asking me so many questions that I really got sick of them once in a while. He's told me, "I made a great mistake, Howard. I told people that I was gonna copy **Bringing Up Baby**, and that gave 'em a chance to write that Ryan O'Neal wasn't Cary Grant, and Barbra Streisand wasn't Katherine Hepburn, and that I'm not Howard Hawks. I'm never gonna do that again."

I thought he did a fine job on **What's Up Doc?**, because he didn't have comedians. Those people are not comedians, so everything that's funny about the picture is something that

Peter did. I thought he did an excellent job, and of course the general public likes it.

BACKSTAGE INTERVIEW

Q: Going back to the question of the strong Hawksian woman, if you don't mind, we were wondering how much Leigh Brackett had to do with the writing of those characters.

HAWKS: Oh, very little. Leigh is a very fine writer, who writes much better about men than she does about women. So a great deal of the stuff that's in there had to come from me. She's won about three Silver Spurs awards for writing westerns. I hired her because I read a book that she wrote, and I thought Leigh Brackett was a man's name. In walked a rather attractive girl who had just been playing tennis or something. She *wrote* like a man. The first thing I put her doing was working with William Faulkner on the script for **The Big Sleep**. They did it in five days.

Q: Leaving a few holes, like Owen's murder ....

HAWKS: A marvelous writer wrote **The Big Sleep**, Raymond Chandler. He was one of the two outstanding writers of that kind of stuff — Chandler and Dashiell Hammett. Bill Faulkner said, "This man is so good, what the deuce can we do?" I said, "Well, you can hook it together." It's full of inconsistencies. We were having an argument one time about who killed Owen, and no one ever knew who did it. After we had argued about it a lot I sent Chandler a wire and said, "Who killed him?" and he said, "So and so." I said, "He couldn't have, he was down at the beach at the time." So we didn't bother about it — we just tried to make good scenes.

Q: It moves so quickly that you don't notice the inconsistencies unless you're paying incredible attention.

HAWKS: Our whole job was to leave no red herrings. The audience saw everything that the detective learned. You could make up your own mind about it. The fun Bogart and I had was trying to make every scene entertaining and good. For instance, when he did the scene in the book shop he said, "How was that?" and I said, "Pretty dull." So he pushed up his hat, started talking with a lisp, and I said, "Go ahead, do it that way." We had a lot of fun.

*Q: Can we talk about **Rio Bravo** and **El Dorado**? There are so many plot similarities between them that it's almost as if you were taking another shot at **Rio Bravo** when you did **El Dorado**. Was that in your mind? Which of the two films do you prefer? And can you say something about the differences?*

HAWKS: Well, there were a couple of semi-historical pictures, like **Red River** which was about the opening of the west, and then there were pictures like **Rio Bravo** where the west has been settled, and law and order came — the tribulations of the sheriff running the town. There aren't too many good plots for westerns.

Rio Bravo was so successful that I said, "Let's try it the other way. We'll make the sheriff the drunk this time, and instead of a boy who shoots awfully good we'll get somebody who can't shoot" — and we just had fun doing it. I don't think they were the same; in fact they were diametrically opposite. If you saw that they were direct opposites, then you're pretty good.

Q: But the group of people holed up in the jail with the bad guys outside, the exchange of prisoners, the problems with the drunk character, the scene in the bar when Wayne goes in after the injured bad guy – all those elements duplicate in both pictures.

HAWKS: Oh, sure. Those are just the logical things that happen when you get into a fight like that. And as long as the audience liked it, you might as well do it again anyway. If a man paints a picture, do you object to the fact that he uses the same style in the next picture he paints?

Q: Of course not. Anyway, I think the similarities between the films are fascinating – I wasn't criticizing them.

HAWKS: It's like if you happen to have a good backhand in tennis — you don't abolish it. If you make a good shot with it you keep on using it. We put a little different twist on it, but we used it because we found out that people liked it. All we're trying to do is make entertainment.

*Q: Some of the variations in **El Dorado** struck me as being improvements over **Rio Bravo**. There's a suggestion that **El Dorado** might be a sequel, too: that bit of dialogue in the beginning, where Maudie explains to Mitchum that Cole met her right after her husband died and helped her – it's sort of a quick summation of the plot of **Rio Bravo**.*

HAWKS: That could very easily be so. You can never tell how it's going to go. Steve McQueen said that he took two hours for a picture that we did in five minutes — the Jim Caan story, where he's been chasing somebody to get revenge.

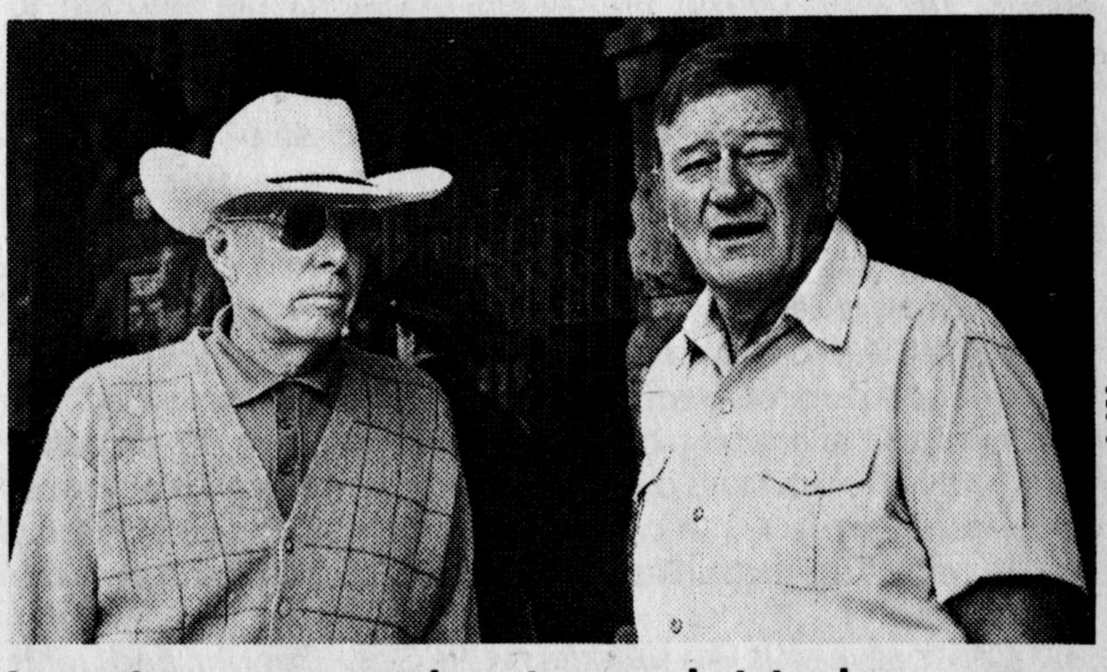
*WISE: Was there an additional scene shot for the end of **El Dorado** where Cole and Maudie get together? The plot seems to lead up to such a scene, but it isn't there.*

HAWKS: No, I never made that. I had a couple of ways of ending it. To me, the two heroes limping down the street was funny, and the audience always laughed at it. A whole bunch of people I was working with said, "What did you shoot that thing for?" I said, "If you don't think it's funny, wait 'til you see it cut into the picture." They came around afterwards and said, "It's funny."

Q: It's a very meaningful image — especially in terms of your running theme of mutual dependence — how people need the help of other people to get the job done. Two cripples, working together, become very strong and effective. Does that make sense?

HAWKS: It goes a little further than that. You're telling a story of friendship, which is really a love story between two men. What the devil, if somebody didn't help the other, then why would they be friends? It's just that simple. You have to get them into a predicament where one can help the other.

*Q: Can you tell us something more about the remake of **A Girl In Every Port**?*



Hawks and Wayne

I can't even send out a script today without having everybody stealing things. Every bum agent in town knows what's in your script before it's been out a week. So I just don't do it. I have two scripts, one with good scenes and one with bad, and I send out the bad one.

HAWKS: I won't tell you what the complete story is, but it works out awfully good. The reason I don't want to tell you very much is 'cause somebody'll put it in a television show long before it comes out. I can't even send out a script today without having everybody stealing things. Every bum agent in town knows what's in your script before it's been out a week. So I just don't do it. I have two scripts, one with good scenes in it and one with bad, and I send out the bad one.

But it is gonna be a lot like **Girl In Every Port**. I told some French directors, "With your usual proclivity, you're

gonna say that when the girl walks off and leaves them they've turned into homosexuals."

Q: You've always managed to deal in strong friendships between men without suggesting homosexuality. How?

HAWKS: Well, that happens so often in real life that .... It's probably one of the strongest bonds, friendship between two men. It usually begins with conflict.

Q: Do you think there can be that kind of friendship between two women?

HAWKS: I doubt it very much. I don't think they're equipped the same way. Usually friendship between men is born by one helping the other — and I don't think that would be too prevalent in women.

Q: You don't think women would help each other?

HAWKS: I don't think they'd have the chance to do as much as men. Certainly not in trouble.

*WISE: Still, in some of your later films women really take active roles. In both **El Dorado** and **Rio Lobo** women shoot the bad guys.*

HAWKS: Yeah, and all of you stand up and ask me questions about the strong women and everything! That happens to be the kind of woman that I like — I don't see why they have to sit around and wash dishes. They have a chance to do something.

SHEDLIN: And yet I sensed a real reticence for you to voice a positive feeling for the women's liberation movement during the audience Q&A.

HAWKS: Well, why do they have to do so much yelling about it? That's just become a form of speech, women's lib. The woman that you admire is the one who, for years, has taken the liberties and done the things without doing a lot of talking. I hate these people who go around spouting — they're no good unless they talk about things that they do. For instance, I can't *stand* Jane Fonda — I wouldn't want to get anywhere near her.

Q: Well, in some ways she seems to have things in common with the so-called Hawksian woman.

HAWKS: Oh, I don't think so. She talks too much, and about stuff she doesn't know about.

Q: Still, the idea that women need not be secondary characters is something you've pretty much pioneered.

HAWKS: I said on stage I hate moonlight on the water, and soft romantic things — I think it's a lot of junk. So I've done the other, and as long as you're doing the other you have to have girls that fall into that thing.

*Q: Also, in many of your films the men learn a lot from women. In **Only Angels Have Wings**, Cary Grant is so emotionally constipated that he can't even express sorrow when his friend is killed; he learns to accept his emotions from Jean Arthur.*

HAWKS: *I've* learned an awful lot from 'em in the number of years I've spent, so there's no reason that some of the characters shouldn't.

*Q: Were you influenced at all by Ford's **Air Mail** when you made **Only Angels**?*

HAWKS: I never saw it. I was influenced by knowing the characters that were in my story. All of that is true. For instance, I knew the fellow who jumped out of a plane and left someone behind, and nobody would talk to him. And the thing where Grant has to tell his friend about his broken neck — I saw it happen. The only thing we added was that Grant went and stood out in the rain while his friend died.

I did a lot of flying myself. I had dinner one night with some bush pilots down in Mexico, and they told me about this little place where the Grace Line boat stopped, and they had to fly over a hump and they had a man sitting up there. So I wrote it down on a piece of paper, and then one day I went over to talk to Frank Capra about something.

Harry Cohn always knew everyone who came into Columbia, and instead of giving me permission to go and talk to Capra he asked me to come up and talk to *him*. He said, "Look, I'm stuck, I've got to have a story for Cary Grant and Jean Arthur." I said, "Here's a story I was writing on this morning." I left him, saw Capra, and when I came back he said, "When can you start?" I said, "What do you mean, I haven't got a script written." He said, "You've got to start ten days from now." I said, "OK, but it's gonna cost you a lot more money."

Q: There are a number of incredible sequences in there, but my favorite one is when Joe tries to land in the fog, and he narrowly escapes crashing. So he circles around for another try, and you figure for sure that he's gonna make it this time 'cause he almost blew it once, and then he crashes!

Only Angles Have Wings

Jean Arthur was very difficult to work with. She didn't understand until after the film was done what it was I wanted — which was Bacall.

HAWKS: All those things are perfectly real. I've had about 10,000 hours, so I've heard an awful lot of flying stories. Even the condor that came through the cockpit was real. And that location was absolutely real.

Q: Where did you shoot?

HAWKS: Hollywood.

Q: I don't believe it.

HAWKS: A mountain's a mountain wherever you go. We had to take a plane out into the mountains, but we shot in California. You fly a little ways up north and you get all the snow you want. There's some good flying in that.

*Q: They showed a clip from **Dawn Patrol** this afternoon, and the stunt flying in that is spectacular too.*

HAWKS: I was the German up there — flying myself. I made a hell of a German, I'll tell you that!

*Q: A final question on **Angels**: How was Jean Arthur?*

HAWKS: Jean Arthur was very difficult to work with. She didn't understand until after the film was done what it was I wanted — which was Bacall.

*Q: Was it exciting working with Louise Brooks on **A Girl In Every Port**?*

HAWKS: Oh, yeah, I thought she did an awfully good job. That was her first picture. Somebody brought in a good looking girl ....

*Q: Were you satisfied with **Red Line 7000**?*

HAWKS: No. It was an experiment — in telling three stories. I had three stories about racing, and couldn't make up my mind which one to tell, so I thought it might be fun to try and tell all three. It was a horrible mistake, because just when you get an audience interested in one story you drop it, and then they forget it. Then you go to another one, and drop that, and pretty soon you haven't got anything going for you. The main thing in telling a story is getting the audience to root for somebody.

We made a lousy picture that had a lot of great stuff in it called **The Land of the Pharaohs**. Everybody in that was a jerk — you didn't have anyone to root for. The Pharaoh was a selfish old guy, the girl was a bitch, Sidney Franklin

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was double-crossing everybody, so it was really a bunch of junk when it was finished.

Q: I heard that there were difficulties with the dialogue because Faulkner didn't know what the Pharaoh talked like.

HAWKS: Well, do you?

Q: Uh, now that you mention it . . . .

HAWKS: Faulkner said, "Can I write him like a Kentucky Colonel?" I said, "Sure." Then Harry Kurnitz said, "Can I write him like King Lear?" I said, "All you guys are doing is leaving it up to me to rewrite it after you get through," and they said, "That's right." I didn't know what he talked like either, and I did a lousy job. It was awful.

Q: Josh Dunson, the Wayne character in ***Red River****, seems very close to Wayne himself – his strength, his bull-headedness, his contempt for what he sees as weakness. I think that's one of the reasons he comes off so well in the film, but I've always wondered if Wayne felt at all uneasy about playing that kind of character.*

HAWKS: Wayne had done, probably, 50 cheap westerns where he didn't have to do anything. He read the script for **Red River** and said, "I don't know whether I want to play an old man." I said, "You're *gonna* be an old man pretty soon, and you ought to get used to it. And you also better start playing characters instead of that junk you've been playing." So he said, "How do I show that I'm old?" and I said, "Did you ever see me get up? Just do it that way." So he did it, and he saw the film and he said, "Lord, I'm *old*." He didn't have to do a lot of silly things, either. And Jack Ward said, "I never knew that big ox could act."

Q: ***Stagecoach*** *made him a star, but* ***Red River*** *made him an actor.*

HAWKS: That's what Ford thinks.

Q: How did you find doing a musical? ***Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*** *is an awfully entertaining film — in fact, it's one of my favorite films of yours. And yet, in many ways it's rather out of character for you.*

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

I found Jane Russell in a dentist's office getting ten dollars a week.

HAWKS: I had used Monroe in a picture with Cary Grant, so they signed her and tried to make a star out of her. They gave her about four stories, and they were all failures. Zanuck wanted to know why, and I said, "Because you did real pictures, and she isn't real. She's just a complete fantasy, there isn't one real thing in her. She ought to do a musical comedy." He said, "She can't sing." I said, "Yes she can." "How do *you* know?" I said, "She goes to cocktail parties in Palm Springs, and nobody'll take her home so she comes around and asks if I will. And then she doesn't talk. One time I said, 'If you can't talk, can you sing?' and she said yes. We turned on the radio, and she sang along — so I know she can sing."

Zanuck said, "OK, you make the picture." I said, "If I can get someone to hold up Monroe, like Jane Russell." He said, "You can't get her," and I said, "I think I can. Get her on the phone." I had found Jane in a dentist's office getting ten dollars a week.

I said, "I've got a picture for you," and she said, "When do we start?" I said, "Now wait a minute, there's a part in it that may be better than yours." She said, "Well, you want me, don't you?" and I said yes. She said, "OK, I'll do it." She was more help than anything in the world, because she would explain to Marilyn what I wanted. And I would hear Marilyn say, "Well, why didn't *he* say that?" after I'd just told it to her six or eight times.

The camera liked her, the camera made her sexy. But if you worked with her she could be sitting around with practically nothing on, and everyone would pass her by. A good looking girl, dressed up, would pass by and everybody would whistle. They never did that with Marilyn. She could never get anyone to take her out.

Q: One of the things I like about ***Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*** *is that one of your running themes is professionalism, and the women in the film are professional women – I mean they're professional about* being *women. Was that conscious on your part?*

HAWKS: No, just something I believe in, probably, and don't think about. I don't analyse any of these things. I've found that if I think a thing's funny, the audience thinks it's funny. If I think it's exciting, the audience thinks so. If I like a girl, the audience likes her. If I like a man, the audience likes him. So I don't worry. I just go ahead and make a movie.

SHEDLIN: In this regard, there's been a recent resurgence of serious film criticism, and critics have picked out these themes in your work — friendship, professionalism and so on. Do you think they've been accurate in their analyses?

HAWKS: You mean all the things they attribute that I didn't think about? I don't know, I've just been very frank — especially with the French. When I go over there about 30 or 40 of them want to meet me, have some drinks and something to eat, and I talk to 'em. I get laughing and say, "You guys attribute strange things to me — I'm just doing the things I like."

Q: Are you saying that these themes are absent, or merely that you didn't put them in consciously, weren't aware of them?

HAWKS: Oh, professionals are the only people I'm interested in. Amateurs I'm not interested in. Flying, driving races, or anything like that — I'm interested in the guys who are good. I hate losers, and the ones who are not good are bound to be losers. So I just don't pay any attention to them.

Q: Why do you suppose the French had to "discover" you, so to speak, when you were always one of our most successful, and popular directors?

HAWKS: The answer to that is very simple. In Europe they don't put the names of the stars up, they put the director's name up, and then you grow to think about the director's work. The English did that before the Americans, the Italians did it, the Swedish did it. Holy smoke, I have much more fun over there than I do in America where they're just beginning to appreciate the work of directors. They're beginning to find out that some directors put a stamp on their work and some don't, some are good story tellers and some aren't. It's a lot of fun for me, now, but it's been a horrible fight for Capra, Ford, myself — we've been fighting for credit, and we've done it mostly by not going under contract. We don't agree to do something until we have things our own way.

WISE: Do you normally do a lot of rewriting on the scripts for your films?

HAWKS: To a certain extent. It's the use of words, and shortening things down so they become a little bit more concise. Or if the character is such that he's an elaborate talker, adding a few words just to get the results that I want. But the tenor of a scene is set up by the writers. That's why I use such good ones.

Q: You've used some of the best over the years – Faulkner, Furthman, Brackett, Hecht. Do you have any favorites?

HAWKS: Hecht and MacArthur were great. I've just used the best ones I could get hold of.

Q: You've always used the best actors, too, which is one of the things that struck me oddly about ***Rio Lobo*** *— because, for the first time, I felt that you didn't have the acting you needed. The actresses in particular were weak.*

HAWKS: The story of **Rio Lobo** was, again, the story

of a friendship between two men. The company wasn't too smart, and they said, "We can't afford another star." I said, "Then I can't shoot the picture, because I can't put a weak person up against Wayne," so we had to rewrite the whole script. I'm using the story that we were originally going to use in **Rio Lobo** on my next picture, which I hope will be done with some smarter people than were on **Rio Lobo**.

Then we had to do some quick casting. The girl that I wanted was a German girl, but I couldn't bring her over because the Guild objected — and I wasn't too satisfied with the girl that did the picture.

WISE: She was rather neurotic, it seemed, in a part that wasn't neurotic at all – a strange thing for a Hawks woman.

HAWKS: I didn't know what the deuce to do about another man. The Mexican boy did his best, but he didn't have much command of English so it was very hard for him to work.

Q: Do you feel that there are any young actresses around with the strength and talent of Bacall?

HAWKS: I can't find 'em. That's why we don't get great parts. That's why I'm late starting the picture that I'm going to make, because I need somebody. It's too much trouble to make a picture today — to start shooting unless you're sure that the actors are right. I'll find somebody.

SHEDLIN: While we're talking about the present, what are your feelings about the new freedom in Hollywood, the so-called "New Hollywood"? I don't mean just in terms of sex, but independent productions, shooting more on locations, smaller crews. Do you think that will effect the way in which you work?

HAWKS: It doesn't effect me — I hope I don't make 'em as bad as they're making them.

SHEDLIN: Then you think this is a bad period?

HAWKS: God, I think it's the lowest of the low. CBS has got a bunch of pictures they can't release, because they're made by a bunch of people who don't know how to tell a story. I think it's pretty bad. Still, it's changing right now. What pictures have been popular recently? **The Last Picture Show**, an old picture; **Airport**, an old picture; **Godfather**, an old picture; **Love Story**, an old picture. We're *certainly* going back. Audiences are howling and yelling for the old stuff.

Q: When you were answering questions from the audience, you mentioned a possible re-release of **Scarface**. *Is that imminent?*

HAWKS: No, it's not completely definite. We're just thinking about it. We don't know whether this is exactly the right time or not.

Q: Why has Howard Hughes held **Scarface** *out of circulation for so long?*

HAWKS: I don't know. Maybe he was smart.

[At this point the axe falls: some guy comes over and tells Hawks that he's got to leave if he's going to make his next scheduled stop. We start packing up.]

Q: As always, we're looking forward to your next film.

HAWKS: I don't know when it will be made, exactly, because as I told you I haven't found a girl.

Q: Yeah, where's the Lauren Bacall of 1972?

HAWKS: You know, they're a little hard to find. When Bacall first worked for me she was 18 — her first picture. Not that she isn't good now, but she wouldn't be so good in pictures. She's great on the stage.

Q: How old does the girl you're looking for need to be?

HAWKS: Oh, anywhere between 16 and 30, provided she's got a decent voice and a little .... I can't use a little kid running around, you know. There's a girl, Tuesday Weld, who's awfully good, but I can't use her — she's got a baby face.

I was going to tell you, we may do the story of Hemingway. I knew him very, very well. It might be fun to do it.

END

Michael Goodwin and Naomi Wise are somewhere on the Pan American Highway, headed for Tierra del Fuego and Cape Horn. If their pick-up truck holds up (and they're not ripped off by banditos) they'll be back in May or June.

SOME COMMENTS

about

ALL THE BRIGHT YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN

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— Thomas Berger, *Esquire*

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THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE

Director: Luis Bunuel. Screenplay: Luis Bunuel and Jean-Claude Carrière. Editor: Hélène Plemmiannikov. Photography: Edmond Richard. Cast: Fernando Rey, Delphine Seyrig, Stéphane Audran, Bulle Ogier, Jean-Pierre Cassel, Paul Frankeur, Julien Bertheau, Michel Piccoli. Greenwich Productions 1972. Eastmancolor. 105 minutes. Distribution: Twentieth Century Fox.

In 1951, when **Los Olvidados** won Luis Bunuel the Best Director award at Cannes, Jacques Prévert appropriated the title for a poem that begins: "The last time I saw Luis Bunuel / was in 1938 in New York North America / Until the night before last in Cannes / when I saw him in long shot and in close-up / He hasn't changed ...." A lot of other people "rediscovered" Bunuel at that time but, apart from a faithful handful, they soon dropped him again. There is a persistent critical habit of confusing production values with art, and Bunuel's Mexican output was distinctly low-budget. Furthermore, the erratic manner in which his films reached the foreign market made it difficult to keep up with what he was doing. So Bunuel's career as a cult figure didn't really start until his 1961 *succès de scandale* **Viridiana**, which shared the top prize at Cannes. From then on he could do no wrong, and you risked being laughed at if you suggested there was less merit in the classy-looking **Belle de Jour** than in a Mexican quickie like **River of Death**, which looks as though it was filmed over a weekend.

Yet to me, at least, it was obvious that although **Viridiana** marked an upward turn for Bunuel at the box office, artistically it pointed downhill. I didn't think so when it first came out; like everybody else, I thought it was a great movie. But seeing it again four years later, I was struck by how rapidly the film had aged, as will happen with festival prizewinners. (Nevertheless, certain contemporary directors — Robert Altman, Jean Yanne, and Gilles Carle — have found it a good film to steal from.) In the meantime, I had also seen **The Exterminating Angel** and **The Diary of a Chambermaid**, and liked neither. I began to wonder whether my estimate of Bunuel as one of the three or four greatest living directors wasn't a trifle exaggerated, and my doubts were confirmed by **Belle de Jour** and **La Voie Lactée**.

It was surely no coincidence that Bunuel had been taken up by a middle-class public just at the time when the anarchist humanism of such films as **Los Olvidados** and **Cela S'Appelle L'Aurore** had ceased to be visible in his work. A lot of the old Bunuel, of course, remained, but some of that one would gladly dispense with. His obsession with the human foot was merely tiresome, and in general what passed for avant-gardism in his work could impress only those for whom the techniques of a by-now-academic mode like surrealism were daring novelties. His celebrated anti-clericalism looked suspiciously like an inverted yearning for Mother Church, and as Pannekoek argued against Lenin, sabotaging religion is not a revolutionary priority — capitalism is doing the job itself. Then, too, the Stendhalian admiration for energy that Bunuel's films betrayed was essentially bourgeois. (The energetic man Gets Things Done.) It partly accounted for the failure of **The Diary of a Chambermaid**, where the initial pointlessness of satirizing the decay of the French provincial bourgeoisie of the '20s was compounded by the fact that Joseph and Célestine, the only characters with genuine vitality, were in domestic service, notoriously an occupation where the worker identifies with the boss. Célestine in fact marries into the bourgeoisie, and Joseph, a card-carrying fascist who rapes and murders a little girl, realises his dream of becoming that archetypical French petty bourgeois, a café owner. But when a director, particularly one as enigmatic as Bunuel, withholds sympathy from his principal characters, the effect is liable to be chilling unless there is enough comedy or melodrama to serve as the focus of interest. That compensation is lacking in **The Diary of a Chambermaid**, which is a very cold film indeed, as are **Belle de Jour, Tristana** and, to a lesser extent, **Viridiana**.

The trouble is, I think, that in each of those films the protagonist is a woman, and where women are concerned Bunuel is as conservative as John Ford, but sadistic where Ford is sentimental (although Ford approves of spanking — see **The Quiet Man** and **Donovan's Reef**). To put it crudely, Bunuel is not the kind of director you could imagine having an affair with his leading lady, and it was characteristic that he should have wrecked his chances in Hollywood by insulting Lily Damita. Women in Bunuel's films have a hard time; the best they are likely to get is a loveless liaison, the worst, violent death, with maybe a little rape en route. The paradoxical element of Bunuel's misogyny is his gift for enhancing the beauty of already lovely women: Maria Felix, Simone Signoret, Jeanne Moreau, Catherine Deneuve.

But then, Bunuel's films have always been outstanding on the purely visual level, even in the '60s, when handsome-looking art movies had become a dime a dozen, and when there were directors — Antonioni, Rohmer — whose reputations were largely the reflected glory of their cameramen.

It wasn't enough, however, and after seeing **Tristana** I wrote in these pages that Bunuel should retire. Now, having seen **The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie**, the least I can say is that I was over-hasty. This film ranks among Bunuel's best, alongside **Los Olvidados** and **The Young One**.

To begin with, it is an extremely funny film, a virtuoso demonstration of deadpan humor. Which means, of course, that by no means is everybody going to find it funny. In Paris, for instance, the film has been a big hit, but judging by the experience of myself and friends I have compared notes with, Parisians must have been drawn by the snob value of Bunuel's name, the strong cast, and the hope that the title promised a nice adulterous soufflé — in other words, a typical boulevard movie.

As for the cliché equation "bourgeois equals hypocrite," Bunuel assumes that it needs no demonstration and can be taken for granted. His own bourgeois background serves him here. Too often, artistic attacks against the bourgeoisie have rejected-lover overtones, like the Angry Young Man phenomenon in England in the '50s. Bunuel's attitude toward the principal characters of his film is one of detached amusement, if indeed he does not feel a certain fatherly affection for their absurdities.

There are seven of them: three men, friends and business associates (that is to say, they are involved in drug-peddling) three women, two of whom are wives of two of the men, and a bishop with a worker-priest complex who is employed as a gardener by one of the married couples. Periodically they meet for dinner, and invariably the meal is interrupted in some grotesque fashion, often by men with guns — soldiers, police or gangsters. As in **The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz**, where a bride is shot dead at her wedding reception, Bunuel demonstrates just how fragile the security of the bourgeois really is, how the violence which the bourgeois uses against the proletariat is liable at any time to backfire. In bourgeois society there are no sanctuaries and nothing is sacred. When the bishop, whose parents were mysteriously poisoned when he was a child, hears the dying gardener he has replaced confess to the murder, he administers the last rites, then blasts the man with a shotgun.

The film makes frequent use of dream sequences presented as waking reality, which could, I suppose, be interpreted as a comment on the nature of consciousness in our society, except that Bunuel, as a good Surrealist, enjoys dreams for their own sake. Incidentally, if I am right about his misogyny, it may be significant that all the dreams in this film are dreamed by male characters. The women are less well-defined, although Bulle Ogier makes the most of her role as an alcoholic astrology freak who finds the sight of a musician's fingers sliding up and down the neck of a cello even more disturbing than Silvia Pinal did that phallic cow's udder in **Viridiana**.

But the actor who dominates the film is Fernando Rey, as the ambassador of

2021

a model Latin American republic (it has the world's highest homicide rate) who uses his diplomatic immunity to smuggle drugs. The ultimate in middle-aged Latin urbanity, he employs a marvelous line in clichés. "As I've always said, violence never pays," he murmurs, fondling the knee of a girl revolutionary he subsequently has kidnapped. And, of course: "I'm a socialist myself." He is a comic rogue who would have delighted Ben Jonson or Molière, Tartuffe updated, and to say that, of course, is to admit that satire isn't quite the social fumigant that ancient writers would have had us believe.

"But," I have heard it complained, "the film doesn't offer any *solution*." To which the snappy answer, had I thought of it, would have been: "Neither does *King Lear*." An artist's job is not to provide a magic prescription for the diseases afflicting society, it is to create a valid work of art. Let me close by quoting another of Bunuel's fellow-Surrealists, the poet Benjamin Péret, who in 1945 in a pamphlet entitled *Le Déshonneur des Poètes* attacked the war-inspired nationalism of poets like Aragon and Eluard. Péret, who fought in Spain with POUM, argued that a poet should be revolutionary both in his social activities and his writing, but he should not confuse the two. The pamphlet concludes: "Any 'poem' that exalts a deliberately undefined 'freedom,' if in fact it is not decorated with religious or nationalistic attributes, firstly ceases to be a poem and secondly constitutes an obstacle to the total liberation of humanity, for it deceives by promoting a 'freedom' that conceals new chains. In contrast, there breathes from every *authentic* poem a freedom which, even if not evoked in its political or social aspects, is complete and active, thereby contributing to the effective liberation of humanity." *Geoffrey Minish*

LAST TANGO IN PARIS

Director: Bernardo Bertolucci. Cast: Marlon Brando, Maria Schneider, Jean-Pierre Léaud, Massimo Girotti, Maria Michi, Giovanna Garletti. An Alberto Grimaldi Production. 1972.

Bertolucci first burst on the screen with his fresh and lyrical **Before the Revolution**, a very free adaptation of Stendhal's *Charterhouse of Parma*. In that movie he set the tone for his next two films, **The Conformist** and **The Spider's Strategy** not only in their treatment of political topics, but also in their fluid progression which conceals the well-structured narrative. In all of these movies Bertolucci created especially convincing characters. **Before the Revolution** develops a young man's state of mind at a time when various political tendencies are surfacing in society. **The Conformist** presents a surprisingly understandable characterization of a classic fascist personality, and so does **The Spider's Strategy**. Bertolucci's concern with this political theme can now be seen as part of a general revival of interest by European directors in fascism, whether seen in its historical context as in Vittorio de Sica's **The Garden of the Finzi-Continis**, and even in parts of **Fellini-Roma**, or simply as a human tendency in **Investigation of a Citizen above Suspicion**. But most recently Bertolucci has moved away from political concerns to create yet another fresh and powerful movie.

Last Tango in Paris is the story of a middle-aged American, Marlon Brando, and a young Parisian girl, Maria Schneider, meeting in an empty apartment put up for rent. When she enters she finds him brooding in a corner with the curtains drawn. A few words are exchanged about who will take the place, then Brando picks her up, carries her against the wall, and rapes her. Not exactly an original opening but it sets the sexually violent tone of their affair. The apartment becomes their meeting place, a barren flat which serves as the backdrop for the enactment of their carnal love. He warns her at the very beginning not to ask any questions about him and is likewise uninterested in her background. At the same time he becomes desperately involved with and dependent on this girl which eventually leads him to his doom.

Bertolucci creates the character of this lost American tough guy with remarkable fidelity. His choice of Brando is to be commended, for Brando reaches new heights in interpreting the role. Certainly in **The Godfather** he turned in a dazzling performance, but in Bertolucci's film he has a chance to interpret a character closer to his own public image. It is the gutsy American hero of **On the Waterfront** twenty years later — now middle-aged as he is, now an anti-hero when heroes are a thing of the past. This relic of the post-Hemingway migration to Paris is a man who, priding himself on his individualism and hedonism, has cut himself away from his roots. The physical love of his adulterous wife was his real mainstay and as long as she was around he could look at his lowly surroundings with healthy contempt. Once she is gone — by suicide — a terrible loneliness sets in. His affair with the girl is the immediate gratification he needs to suppress his grief. As a loner he follows his natural tendency to withdraw even more when he is hurt and emerges only in sudden bursts of emotion which Bertolucci records in a few extraordinarily powerful scenes.

Bertolucci's authentic portrayal of an American type caught in the contradictions of his own lifestyle is matched by his sketch of the girlfriend. She is a fresh young bourgeoise who lives the Parisian equivalent of the hip life. Open and spontaneous, she comes in the trap-

Geoffrey Minish is a Canadian freelance journalist and jazz-lover based in Paris.

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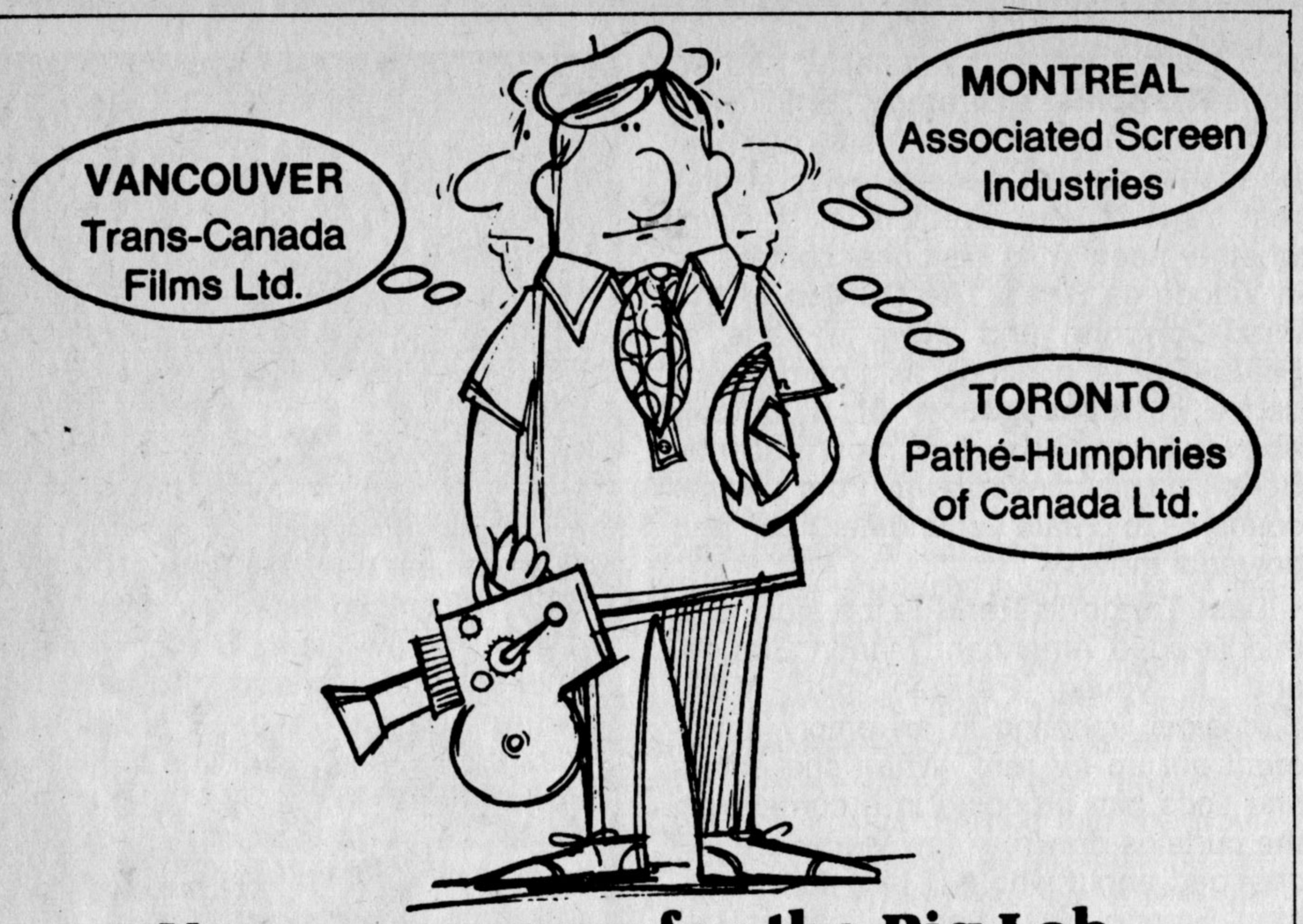

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pings of St. Germain chic, with tailored jeans and elevator shoes. But it is not so much her lack of sincerity as it is the opposition of two different generations and worlds which prevents the two from joining. For her the affair is a crazy adventure before she is to get married. For him it is a desperate search for a reason to live. Their irreconcilable contrast is perhaps best shown in the passage where out of frustration and boredom she masturbates while he helplessly sits in the corner with tears streaming down his cheeks.

Bertolucci uses the girl as an excuse to do a fantastic take-off on the French New Wave filmmakers. She has come to look at the apartment for herself and her young film director fiancé, played by Jean-Pierre Léaud, Truffaut's favorite actor. He plays a highly excited, totally involved young man for whom the line between life and cinema has long since disappeared. He takes his camera crew everywhere to try to capture the most authentic aspects of everyday reality with novel freshness from unusual angles. The few times he is without his camera crew he creates a cinematic reality by using his hands to frame imaginary shots and imitating the movements of the camera.

Bertolucci's take-off on the New Wave is brilliant because his caricature of their methods is in itself fresh and lyrical in a way the best passages of New Wave films are. He was inspired by those films already at the time of **Before the Revolution**. His caricature-hommage to and in the style of the New Wave is only a part of the liberties he takes with reality in his movie. These are his whims which appear at unexpected moments and go unexplained without really affecting the narrative development.

Brando looks out the window at a certain moment and sees in an adjacent building a couple about to do something. Again the viewer's curiosity is aroused and left hanging. These caprices of Bertolucci's are like those of the New Wave director in his movie. Brando's personal drama appears in high contrast to this cinematic playfulness.

This extraordinary Bertolucci film will touch off a controversy that will have to do neither with his directing nor with Brando's acting. The debate will center around its bold use of sex. Indeed **Last Tango in Paris** is sexually more daring than any movie made by a major director for a general audience. In the course of the movie Bertolucci shows with honesty and absolute realism nudity, rape, sodomy, masturbation, and more. There is nothing gratuitous about these passages. The tough guy expatriate lives out the world of Henry Miller, and just as you cannot take out the "dirty parts" from Miller's books, so the sexual scenes are absolutely essential to the movie. These passages belong to the film precisely because it is the story of an affair that grows out of a strictly carnal relationship. Brando's whole being is revealed through his sexuality, which alternately mirrors his hedonism, his toughness, his loneliness, his anguish. Unlike the current vogue of films exemplified by **Straw Dogs** and **A Clockwork Orange** which push the old formula of sex and violence much further to shock the public, Bertolucci's exploration of sexuality is required by the story he presents, and he succeeds remarkably well in integrating the sex scenes into the movie. It is only to be hoped that the audience will stop panting long enough to appreciate the movie.

Steven Kovacs

THE KING OF MARVIN GARDENS

Produced and directed by Bob Rafelson. Screenplay: Jacob Brackman, from a story by Bob Rafelson and Jacob Brackman. Photography: Laszlo Kovacs. Executive Producer: Steve Brackman. Cast: Jack Nicholson, Bruce Dern, Ellen Burstyn, Julia Anne Robinson, Benjamin "Scatman" Crothers. A BBS production, released by Columbia Pictures. Color. 103 minutes.

The screen is dark. The back of a man's head appears in the left corner of it and keeps moving backwards until it's located in the middle. The head turns 90 degrees and the screen is filled with Jack Nicholson's face. That's a great way to start a movie. So is Nicholson's opening line: "I promised to tell you why I never eat fish." He proceeds to relate a rambling, Salingeresque story about how he and his brother watched their grandfather choke to death on a meal of breaded sole, and "from that moment on, my brother and I became accomplices forever."

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Though David Staebler's story proves to be false, he and his brother Jason (Bruce Dern) are still accomplices; Bob Rafelson's new film, **The King of Marvin Gardens**, is devoted to observing how their sibling relationship leads to failed dreams and death. David is a radio "personality" on a Philadelphia FM station who ekes out a marginal living by spinning tales of late-night angst. Jason, a former front man for a black mob, lives on dreams of quick money and easy success. Holed up in mid-winter Atlantic City with his fading mistress (Ellen Burstyn) and her step-daughter, Jason summons David and engages him in a plan to realize an old Staebler brothers' fantasy: to build and run an island paradise.

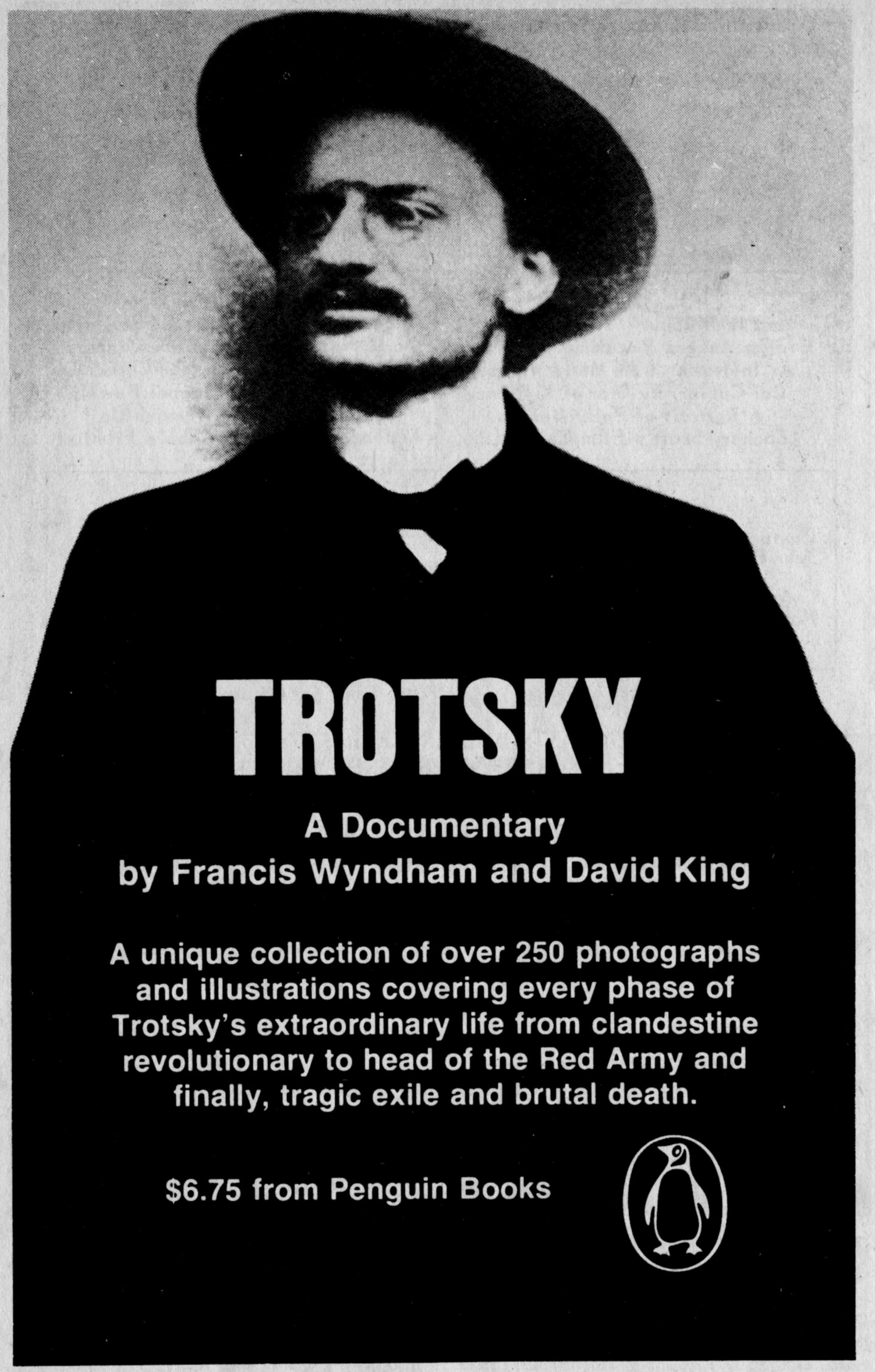
Five minutes into the film, we are aware that it is clearly the work of the man who made **Five Easy Pieces**. After he has finished his monologue, David journeys home. Stopping for a meal in a seedy all-night cafeteria, he moves through deserted subway stations and across solitary, early morning streets. The editing is paced at a slow, restrained rhythm, lingering over details and conjuring up, as in the earlier film, a feeling of low-keyed poeticism from drably realistic settings and situations. Similarly, Rafelson uses the depressed, deserted milieu of Atlantic City in winter for both poetry and naturalism. During the hotel room sequences, when the four protagonists are alternately being swept up and torn apart by Jason's day-dream, the director relies on his carefully measured editing and deceptively simple camera movements to convey the desperate, frenzied quality of the people's lives. Yet in the exterior scenes, especially those set on the beach, the camera is stationary and the editing is purposely dramatic and self-important. The exteriors have an abstracted, dream-like feeling to them, as if the characters were moving through a fantasyland they can neither fully comprehend nor control. Certain shots — Jack Nicholson standing alone on the beach with a revolver in his hands, Ellen Burstyn standing in front of a bonfire cutting off her hair — stand out as special gems, not only for the compositional beauty which cameraman Laszlo Kovacs has lavished upon them, but for the emotional aptness with which director Rafelson has invested them.

The structure of the film, reinforced by its pacing, is cyclical. Bracketed by two of Nicholson's radio monologues, it makes judicious use of several recurring motifs: an old man's cough, a revolver which is constantly being passed around, and, most notably, the continued complicity of the Staebler brothers. In the course of the film Ellen Burstyn is replaced by her younger, more attractive step-daughter, and shy, inward David begins to assume some of Jason's bravado, yet for all the characters' desperate manoeuvrings the cycle cannot be broken. In the end, David returns to his grandfather's house in defeat, tracing the same steps he followed in the film's opening scenes.

Jacob Brackman's script has been criticized, unfairly I feel, for being symbolic and self-consciously literary. Everybody seems to have ignored the fact that the dialogue is very special: it is simultaneously true to the lives of the characters and yet suggestive of larger, less tangible things. Nicholson's opening monologue is a good example; so is a conversation which Nicholson and Dern have on the boardwalk, chatting about "Stable Arabia," the boyhood kingdom of their dreams. As they talk, we sense not only the joyful/sorrowful quality of their relationship, with Nicholson (who knows better but is still vulnerable) being swept up in Dern's dreams; we are also put in contact with the power our childhood fantasies can have over *us*, how we too can, in some ways, never be free of them.

I could say more, lots more — about the unusually fine acting, about the film's purposeful ambiguity and the almost painfully unresolvable feelings with which it leaves the audience, but I'm running long as it is. So just let me tell you about the closing. After the tragic death of one of the brothers, their grandfather (the one who didn't really choke to death on a dinner of breaded sole) is watching old home movies which are being projected against a door. In the film within a film we see Jason and David Staebler as children, playing on a beach and building sandcastles. The camera pulls in so that only the projector and the home movies are in the frame. As the old man coughs in the background, the film runs through the projector and disappears from the door. There is a moment of stillness, and then the screen goes slowly dark. Now is that a goddamned beautiful way to end a movie, or what?

John Kane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See page 34 for a listing of sources of 16mm prints of films mentioned in this issue.

SAN FRANCISCO FILM FESTIVAL

Given the possibility that the '72 event is the SF Festival's swan song, we wish we could report it had been a killer. Sad to say, it wasn't. Drastically shortened by the Board in light of a continuing financial deficit (last year's Festival ran 14 days; this year's only 10), and with many of the morning screenings dropped, the initial schedule still included some exciting films and events. Unfortunately, many of the most titillating were cancelled at the last moment (Oshima's **Dear Summer Sister**; Murnau's fabled **Four Devils**; a midnight Hitchcock show including **Rope** and **Vertigo**; Perry's **Play It As It Lays**; Pasolini's **Oedipus Rex**; and a visit from Abel Gance), leaving large holes that were never really filled.

The evening programs were largely disappointing. Even the opening night festivities (usually good for a laugh) seemed pedestrian compared to previous years' Fellini-esque galas. (This year, society's frolicsome darlings were attending an art museum opening on the same night, leaving the Festival party to the staid bourgeoisie in their off-the-rack finery.) Fellini's **Roma**, the opening night attraction, proved to be equally boring — an empty, formless catalogue of Fellini schtick; a film without a heart. Subsequent screenings weren't much better: **Chloe In the Afternoon** (the sixth of Rohmer's Moral Tales) was undeniably interesting, but it's the least of his films to date, lacking the rich subtleties of **Claire's Knee** and **Ma Nuit Chez Maude**. (Reportedly, Rohmer is after a mass audience with **Chloe**; it shows.) Rooks' **Siddhartha** was a major bringdown, capturing little of Siddhartha's spiritual growth or the exaltation of his quest. **Ingmar Bergman**, a short documentary by Stig Bjorkman, was interesting but thin.

Highway Queen, a moralistic Israeli film about a prostitute, was a drag. The showing was delayed for 20 minutes while the SF Police Department's Bomb Squad, anticipating Arab terrorism, fine-combed the auditorium. Naomi noted, "If they were looking for a bomb, they should have checked the projection booth." **Mimi the Metalworker**, an Italian film directed by Lina Wertmuller, started out as a fast-moving comedy with strong political overtones, but lost momentum halfway through and turned into **Divorce Italian Style**. Still, Wertmuller's analysis of sexism as the foundation of Fascism is worth noting.

Solaris, a Russian science fiction film directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, was an interminable three-hour bore with about 15 minutes of plot. The science fiction elements were old-hat in 1935, and the actors performed as if half asleep. Pretentious, arty, awful.

Heat, the latest Paul Morrisey, turned out to be his most conventional film to date. No female impersonators, no pricks, everything in focus and lots of plot. Sylvia Miles was terrific, but the fact that she's an actress (never mind that she's a good one) throws the film off balance. Joe Dallesandro seemed laconic, but Eric Emerson and Andrea Feldman were as weird as ever. Not bad, all in all, but hardly as outrageous as we've come to expect from the Factory.

Those are all of the disappointments. We missed several films reported to be of interest: Petri's **Working Class Goes to Heaven**, Jancso's **Red Psalm**, and

Jire's **My Love to the Swallows**. Subjects for further research.

There were five (count 'em) evening films that we considered successful — five out of 22. And one of them was a short.

Traffic, directed by Jacques Tati, is his latest film, and it's a delight. Loosely based on M. Hulot's attempts to get a fancy camper van to an auto show, it offers the same light, fey touch as the earlier Tati, but with a deepening undertone of sadness; the Keaton influence is stronger than ever. The unmistakable sign of a great comedy is that it keeps on happening after the movie is over, and we laughed our way through every traffic jam on the way home. Even now (a month later), a massive tie-up on the Bay Bridge evokes more smiles and fewer curses. *That's* a funny movie.

The Emigrants, written, directed, photographed and edited by Jan Troell, proved to be the most popular film at the Festival. Humanistic and deeply moving, its dramatic restraint and attention to detail lift it far beyond the soap opera we feared it might be. Starring Max Von Sydow and Liv Ullman, it's the first half of a two-part epic dealing with a group of Swedish peasants who emigrate to the United States. Conventional in structure, and profoundly simple, it moved us to tears. Troell has plenty of technique up his cinematic sleeves, but he uses it in the service of story telling, not in pyrotechnic displays. **The Emigrants** is a film about real people — a rare and wonderful thing these days.

The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie, the new Bunuel, is extraordinary. Dreams within dreams, veiled hints of unseen horrors, and startling images (like cockroaches crawling out from between the keys of a piano) combine to make an amusing and disturbing work of art. Beautiful decor, fine acting, top-notch photography and editing — in short, an extremely well made film with a real artist behind it. Bunuel is as crabby as ever, thank goodness; it's great to have a working surrealist still among us.

Tout Va Bien, Godard/Gorin's attempt to capture a mass audience without compromising their political stance, proved to be a minority taste despite Jane Fonda and Yves Montand: a good part of the crowd walked out after five minutes, and half the audience was gone by the time the lights came up. But even if it fails as mass entertainment, **Tout Va Bien** is still of major importance in that it continues Godard/Gorin's ground-breaking progress toward a new kind of materialist dialectical fiction. Montand turns in a marvelous performance (although neither he nor Fonda are given much to do), and the visuals are as exciting as ever. There's a lot of effective comedy, too.

If **Tout Va Bien** is less than completely successful, even on its own political terms, a 55-minute short called **Letter to Jane**, that Godard-Gorin claim to have whipped up in an afternoon, is a real tour de force. Intended to explicate certain aspects of **Tout Va Bien** (and made specifically to accompany it at Festival screenings), **Letter to Jane** is a rigorous, detailed analysis of a single photograph of Jane Fonda taken in North Vietnam. Camera angle, focus, expression, framing — all are discussed in terms of their political implications. Here, for the first time, we are invited to share the *process* of analysis as well as its fruits. The film is far more than a commentary on **Tout Va Bien**, it's a basic investigation of political aesthetics.

If the evening programs were less than blindingly brilliant, the afternoon events were something else again: endurance marathons running approximately seven hours apiece, they were exhausting but exhilarating. Two retrospectives (Hawks and Walsh) and one special screening (Gance's **Napoleon and the Revolution**) went a long way toward making the Festival an event of real importance.

The Hawks tribute included two rare silents, **Fig Leaves** and **A Girl in Every Port**. While of historical interest, **Fig Leaves** is not major Hawks — it's essentially a well-done period comedy. **A Girl In Every Port** on the other hand, is extremely revealing. Starring Victor McLaughlin and Robert Armstrong, it also features Louise Brooks in her first (we

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think) screen role. Robin Wood treats the film at length in his Hawks book, so we'll pass over it quickly. The prototypical Hawksian male group is presented at its most adolescent. McLaughlin and Armstrong are just big kids: in a delightful scene with a little boy, the two men sit on the floor playing with a toy boat in a basin, utterly engrossed in the game. Like many late silents, it's so smooth and expert that we hardly noticed the absence of a soundtrack. An enjoyable, interesting movie — and unmistakably Hawks, even in 1928.

Three hours of film clips (plus **Bringing Up Baby** in its entirety) followed the two silents. The clips didn't include anything from **The Big Sleep, Rio Bravo, Hatari!** or **El Dorado**, and even when important films *were* dealt with, the clips that were shown were seldom the ones we'd have chosen. It's unfortunate; with all of Hawks' films to choose from, a less-scattered retrospective could have offered a golden opportunity to point up running themes and variations. Still, any Hawks retrospective, even a random one, is welcome.

The Walsh tribute wasn't as exciting. In the morning, **The Thief of Bagdad** was shown to a houseful of appreciative kids, followed by the delightful **Gentleman Jim** (a concession to San Francisco chauvinism, disappointing those who were hoping for **White Heat**). Then there were hours of clips, some better than others. When Walsh took the stage he proved to be a master anecdotalist, enchanting the audience with bawdy reminiscences concerning the likes of Errol Flynn and John Barrymore. Surprisingly, however, he had little to say about his films.

By the last afternoon of the Festival, when Gance's **Napoleon** was shown, almost everyone was bleary-eyed and wasted. Despite the general fatigue, however, the screening revealed a true hero of the cinema, a filmmaker we could love. Gance's cinema is lofty, humanistic, and deeply entertaining. He was among the first to use suspense as a plot element; he made the first sound films in France; he was the inventor of both stereo sound and Cinerama — years before audiences were ready for any of it.

Napoleon and the Revolution left no doubt that we were in the presence of a masterpiece. Originally shot silent and in Polyvision (Gance's triple-screen process), this print was reduced to a single screen with sound added. The post-synch, done years after the film was shot, includes the voices of many of the original actors — notably Antonin Artaud (as Marat) and Gance himself (as a young, fiery Saint-Just).

Napoleon is a dense, thrilling film of remarkable epic sweep. The visuals pick you up and shake you apart, and the editing is far more precise and adventurous than anything being done, even today, in large-budget films. **Napoleon** was the most satisfying film of the Festival; it's probably one of the greatest films ever made. Seeing it was like visiting an ancient Roman villa and finding the plumbing in perfect working order.

Michael Goodwin & Naomi Wise

TWO ENGLISH GIRLS AND THE CONTINENT

Director: François Truffaut. Screenplay: François Truffaut and Jean Gruault, from the novel by Henri Pierre Roché. Editor: Yann Dedet. Photography: Nestor Almendros. Music: Georges Delerue. Cast: Jean-Pierre Léaud, Kika Markham, Stacey Tendeter, Sylvia Marriott. A co-production of Les Films du Carrosse and Cinetel. 1971.

Perhaps the worst thing that can happen to an artist is to produce works of genius early in his or her career. Almost invariably, two things happen: 1) Everything produced after those first works is judged by the previous high standards; critics tear the artist apart for not producing masterpieces each time; and, 2) A cult of admirers forms, their lack of discrimination providing no objective evaluation to help the artist in the creation of the next work.

Some modern cult-directors would be Jean-Luc Godard (the revolutionary cult), Alexandro Jodorowsky (the stoned cult), Robert Downey (the camp cult), John Cassavetes (the "honesty" cult), Ken Russell (the kinky, excess cult), Federico Fellini (the fantasy-dream cult), and the director who concerns us here, François Truffaut (the lyrical-romantic cult).

Truffaut's cultist reputation rests mainly on his first three films. **The 400 Blows** alerted us that a new and major cinematic force had arrived on the scene. His second effort, **Shoot the Piano-Player**, was flawed but bursting with lyric fun and cinematic excitement. And, of course, he then hit it big with one of the best films ever made, **Jules and Jim**, the ultimate cinematic expression of complex lyric-romantic ingenuity.

Since then, it's been mostly downhill, with such easily forgettable bourgeois romances as **The Soft Skin** and **The Bride Wore Black**, or such lightweight bits of lyric-romantic fluff as **Stolen Kisses** and **Bed and Board**. Two attempts at heavier works — **Fahrenheit 451** and **The Wild Child** — I found to be static and badly flawed in conception and execution.

Now he's back with a new film, **Two English Girls and the Continent** (also released as **Anne and Muriel**), which is a crashing bore. How the lyrical cultists can remain enchanted so long puzzles me since Truffaut's style has become more and more static with each film, more and more literary, less and less visual. Then, too, Truffaut seems strangely wedded to using as his film hero one of the world's least imaginative and least expressive actors, Jean-Pierre Léaud.

At the risk of seeming to be one of those

critics who attacks Truffaut because he has not produced another work of genius like **Jules and Jim**, it seems to me that what makes **Two English Girls** at all tolerable is precisely its relationship to the earlier masterwork.

Both films are based on novels set in pre-World War I Europe by the late Henri-Pierre Roché. In **Jules and Jim**, two men are in love with the same woman, and Roché follows their strange *ménage à trois* through the years. In **Two English Girls**, two sisters — Anne and Muriel — (who may be the Brontes) find themselves in love with the same man, and this triangular affair is followed over the years. It seems obvious that Roché was dealing in these two novels with a highly sensitive part of his own life.

In **Two English Girls**, Roché suggests that this story is the truer version of what actually happened. For example, his lead character mentions that he wrote a novel called *Jérome et Julien*, disguising the true sexual nature of the triangle because the participants were still alive. In other words, **Jules and Jim** was fiction-based-on-fact, whereas **Two English Girls** touches more truly on the events as actually they happened. (Proving, once again, that fictionalized accounts of reality are often more aesthetically exciting than truth laid out as it really happened. Art must manipulate life.)

The story is interesting enough but Truffaut seems incapable of letting it flower and blossom; instead, he turns it into little more than a dry series of letters, narrations, quick scenes which suggest but do little more. Perhaps the best example of Truffaut's ineptitude is his constant over-use of the iris shot, most of the time to no effect. Or disturbing errors in editing: Claude — the lover (Léaud) — walks up several flights of stairs to get to Anne's room; there, they walk out into a full garden. Where did the magic garden come from? Who knows?

Perhaps something might have been made out of this botched mess had Truffaut had a feeling, from the inside, of what his characters were all about. Certainly his film indicates that he had no earthly idea of the depths of Muriel's personality, and her character is really the most important. Thus the film loses its focus at the core, and we are permitted to observe merely centrifugal pieces of the whole. Is this the same director who created the intriguing Catherine in **Jules and Jim**? What has happened to the man?

It's too bad he didn't understand Muriel, since Stacey Tendeter seems quite capable of fleshing out her meagrely assigned role. Kika Markham does better as Anne, inasmuch as her role has more meat on its skinny bones. Léaud, on the other hand, walks through his portrayal of Claude as a somnambulist, his immobile face giving no clue to any emotional stirability at all. Truffaut seems content to count on narration to convey the drama and trauma of Claude's world — a most non-cinematic way of looking at the possibilities of film, and certainly a strange insult to the art of acting.

If it is true that Léaud has been a semi-autobiographical stand-in for Truffaut in his last few films (they even look alike), one is obliged to feel some sort of pity for Truffaut the man. For lately Truffaut seems ever the observer, always on the surface of his emotional capacities. (Can this be why he is so attracted to Hitchcock?) Léaud-Truffaut is the ultimate "cool" hero, but what the director forgets is that there is a fine line between coolness as means by which to intake and express emotional vibrations, and coolness as an indication of deep aesthetic frigidity. If the latter is true — as seems to be evidenced by his **Two English Girls** — what Truffaut seems to need most right now is a good healthy fuck.

Perhaps we long ago saw the best that Truffaut has to offer. That's a sad thought, since he has demonstrated that he possesses a pure command of his craft, and a deep sense of its inherent possibilities. But right now he's merely treading the aesthetic waters, trying not to drown. Here's hoping he finds dry land soon; it's getting embarrassing watching his flailings.

Bernard Weiner

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IN THE WORKS

Herewith, as complete and up-to-date as we can make it, a necessarily brief summary of recent Canadian independent feature-film activity. Productions that have (to the best of our knowledge) received assistance from the Canadian Film Development Corporation are indicated by an asterisk. (Assembled with the help of the Cinémathèque Québecoise.)

After the spurt of filmmaking activity around the end of last year (a record 46 features were completed in Canada in 1972), the film scene seems to have relaxed somewhat with a substantial number of features either opened, about to open, or in the final stages of post-production.

Among the films mentioned in the last edition of In The Works (Vol. 3 No. 6), the following have had their first theatrical dates: **The Merry Wives of Tobias Rouke, Le P'Tit Vient Vite*, August and July*, La mort d'un bucheron***, and **Pour Quelques Arpents de Neige*** (the first two opened and closed rather quickly, the others seem to be doing relatively well).

Recently-completed films that are about to open include: **Alien Thunder*** (premiering May 23), **The Neptune Factor*** (a Twentieth Century-Fox release to open in June), **The Pyx*** (a Cinerama release to open in August simultaneously in English and French), **Out*** (formerly **Spring Coolie** and now called **Sleep Stream**), **U-Turn*, The Rainbow Boys*, Allo Toulmonde*, Tu brules, tu brules*** (directed by Jean-Guy Noel on a $100,000 budget and produced by Montreal's ACPAV — L'Association coopérative des productions audio-visuelles), and — of course — Claude Jutra's **Kamouraska*** (scheduled for a March 29th opening). Also now scheduled to open at the end of July — after a trouble-fraught production schedule — is Alexis Kanner's production of **Mahoney's Estate.***

A number of films have completed shooting and are being edited or mixed. They include Larry Kent's **Keep It In the Family*** (starring John Gavin and Patricia Gage in the story of the revenge of two middle-class "hippies" on the parents that refuse to subsidize them); Jan Kadar's **Lies My Father Told Me*** (starring Yossi Yadin, Len Birman and Marilyn Lightstone in a $750,000 film about an immigrant family in Montreal around 1925, scripted by Ted Allan); Denis Heroux's **J'ai Mon Voyage*** (the story of a French-Canadian family's trailer trip across Canada, starring Dominique Michel, Régis and René Simard and Yvan Ducharme); Peter Pearson's **Last of the Big Guns*** (starring Keir Dullea, Elizabeth Ashley and John Beck); Don Shebib's **Get Back*** (now called **Surf's Up**, it is the story of two ex-surfers involved in a robbery, and stars Michael Parks, Bonnie Bedelia and Chuck Shamanta); Jean Chabot's **Une nuit en Amerique*** (a $135,000 murder-mystery, being shot in super-16, starring Robert Rivard, Gill Frappier, Guy L'Ecuyer and Raynald Boucher, and being produced by ACPAV); Denys Arcand's **Rejeanne Padovani*** (a film on

A 16mm Booker's Guide to Sources of Films Mentioned in This Issue.

Abel Gance. Contemporary Films/McGraw Hill, Princeton Rd., Hightstown, N.J. 08520
Abraham Lincoln. The Film Center, 1817 Adams Mill Rd., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009 or Kit Parker Films, Box 227, Carmel Valley, Calif. 93924
The Assassination of Trotsky. Canada: International Film Distributors, 20 Bloor St. W., Toronto 189. USA: Cinerama Inc., 1345 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019
Ball of Fire. Canada: BelleVue Film Distributors, 277 Victoria St., Toronto 205. USA: Samuel Goldwyn 16mm, 1041 N. Formosa Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90046
Bed and Board. Canada: Visual Consultants, 72 Carlton St., Toronto. USA: Columbia Cinémathèque, 711 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022
Before the Revolution. Canada: Ciné-Art Film Distribution, 1204 St. Catherine East, Montreal 133 or Cinema Images, 221 Victoria St., Toronto 205. USA: New Yorker Films, 2409 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10024
Belle de Jour. Canada: Cinépix, 8275 Mayrand St., Montreal 308. USA: Hurlock Cine World, 13 Arcadia Road, Old Greenwich, Conn. 06870
The Big Sleep. Canada: Warner Bros., 70 Carlton St., Toronto 200. USA: Audio Brandon, 34 MacQuesten Parkway South, Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10550
Bleak Moments. Contemporary Films Inc., 55 Greek St., London W1V 6DB, England
The Blue Light. British Film Institute, 81 Dean St., London W1V 6AA, England
The Bride Wore Black. United Artists 16mm, 729 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019
Bringing Up Baby. Canada: Janus Film Library, 224 Davenport Rd., Toronto 180. USA: Films Inc., 1144 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, Ill. 60091
Cela s'appelle l'aurore. BelleVue?
Chloe in the Afternoon. Canada: Visual Consultants. USA: Columbia.
The Conformist. Canada: Paramount Pictures, 1 Yonge St., Toronto. USA: Genesis Films, 40 West 55th St., New York, N.Y. 10019
The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz. Faroun Films, 136 St. Paul St. East, Monreal 127
A Cuban Fights Against Demons. ICAIC, Habana, Cuba.
Dance Girl Dance. Canada: Janus
Dawn Patrol. Canada: Warner Bros. USA: Audio Brandon.
Death of a Bureaucrat. ICAIC, Habana, Cuba
Deliverance. Canada: Warner Bros. USA: Warner Bros., 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019
The Diary of a Chambermaid. Canada: BelleVue. USA: Films Inc.
The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie. Canada: BelleVue. USA: Films Inc.
Dr. Phibes Rises Again. Canada: Astral Communications, 224 Davenport Rd., Toronto 180. USA: American International Pictures, 9033 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211
El Dorado. Canada: Paramount. USA: Films Inc.
The Emigrants. Warner Bros.
The Exterminating Angel. Canada: Janus. USA: Audio-Brandon.
Fahrenheit 451. Canada: Universal 16, 2450 Victoria Park Ave., Willowdale 425, Ont. USA: Audio-Brandon.
The Falcons. Faroun Films.
Fat City. Canada: Visual Consultants. USA: Columbia.
Fellini-Roma. United Artists.
Fig Leaves. Films Inc.
Five Easy Pieces. Canada: Visual Consultants. USA: Columbia.
The 400 Blows. Canada: Faroun. USA: Janus Films, 745 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022
Gentleman Jim. United Artists.
Gentlemen Prefer Blondes. Canada: BelleVue. USA: Films Inc.
Hatari!. Canada: Paramount. USA: Films Inc.
Heat. Levitt-Pickman (no address given)
His Girl Friday. Canada: Visual Consultants. USA: Audio-Brandon.
If I Had a Gun. Ajay Film Co., 1619 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10019
I Was a Male War Bride. Canada: BelleVue. USA: Films Inc.
The Joke. Canada: New Cinema Enterprises, 774½ Yonge St., Toronto. USA; Grove Press, 53 East 11th St., New York, N.Y. 10003
Jules and Jim. Canada: Faroun. USA: Janus.
The King of Marvin Gardens. Canada: Vis. Con. USA: Columbia.
The Land of the Pharaohs. Canada: Warner Bros. USA: Audio Brandon.
Last Tango in Paris. United Artists.
La voie lactée. Canada: Int'l Film Distribs. USA: Warner Bros.
Letter to Jane. Anouchka Films, 4 rue Edouard Nortier, 92-Neuilly, Paris, France.
Los Olvidados. Canada: Lapointe Films, 4651 St. Denis Street, Montreal. USA: Audio-Brandon.
Love. Canada: Faroun. USA: George Gund (no address given)
Madchen in Uniform. Contemporary/McGraw Hill and Radim Films, 17 West 60th Street, New York, N.Y. 10023
Memories of Underdevelopment. Tricontinental Film Centre, 244 West 27th St., New York, N.Y. 10001
Mimi the Metalworker. Euro International Films, Viale Rossini 7, Rome.
Morgiana. Ceskoslovensky Filmexport, Vaclavsko nam 28, Prague 1.
My Darling Clementine. Canada: BelleVue. USA: Films Inc.
My Love to the Swallows. Ceskoslovensky Filmexport.
Only Angels Have Wings. Canada: Vis. Con. USA: Audio Brandon.
Pendora's Box. Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10019
The Petro Lamps. Ceskoslovensky Filmexport.
Red Line 7000. Canada: Paramount. USA: Films Inc.
Red River. United Artists.
Rio Bravo. Warner Bros.
The Searchers. Warner Bros.
Shoot the Piano-Player. Janus.
The Smiling Madame Beudet. Museum of Modern Art.
The Soft Skin. Canada: Faroun. USA: Columbia.
Solaris. Sovexportfilm, 14 Kalashny Pereulok, Moskow
Sounder. Canada: BelleVue. USA: 20th Century-Fox.
The Spider's Strategy. New Yorker Films.
Stolen Kisses. United Artists.
The Struggle. Audio Brandon.
The Taming of Fire. Sovexportfilm.
The Thief of Bagdad. Canada: Cinemacraft, 12456 rue de Serres, Montreal 9. USA: Audio Brandon.
The Thing. Canada: Janus. USA: Films Inc.
Three Lives. Canada: New Cinema Enterprises. USA: Impact Films, 144 Bleecker St., New York, N.Y. 10012
To Have and Have Not. Canada: Warner Bros. USA: United Artists.
Tout Va Bien. Anouchka Films.
Traffic. Canada: Visual Consultants. USA: Columbia.
Tristana. Canada: Int'l Film Distribs. USA: Audio Brandon.
Twentieth Century. Canada: Visual Con. USA: Audio Brandon.
Two English Girls and the Continent. Canada: Prima Film, 135 Sherbrooke St. East, Montreal 129. USA: Janus.
Viridiana. Canada: Prima. USA: Audio Brandon.
What's the Matter with Helen?. United Artists.
The Wild Child. United Artists.
Wild Oranges. Films Inc.
Women Talking. Impact Films.
The Young One. Canada: Faroun. USA: Audio Brandon.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS:
Baby Face Harrington. Films Inc.
King Kong vs. Godzilla. Universal.
Mon Oncle Antoine. International Tele-Film, 221 Victoria St., Toronto 205.
Play It Again Sam. Films Inc.
Quick Millions. Films Inc.
Take the Money and Run. Films Inc.
Trial of the Catonsville Nine. Canada: Astral. USA: Cinema 5.

While based on sources we believe reliable and up-to-date, TAKE ONE cannot guarantee the accuracy of any of the above information, nor assume any liability for the results of any mis-information given. We will be happy to print additions and corrections in future issues.

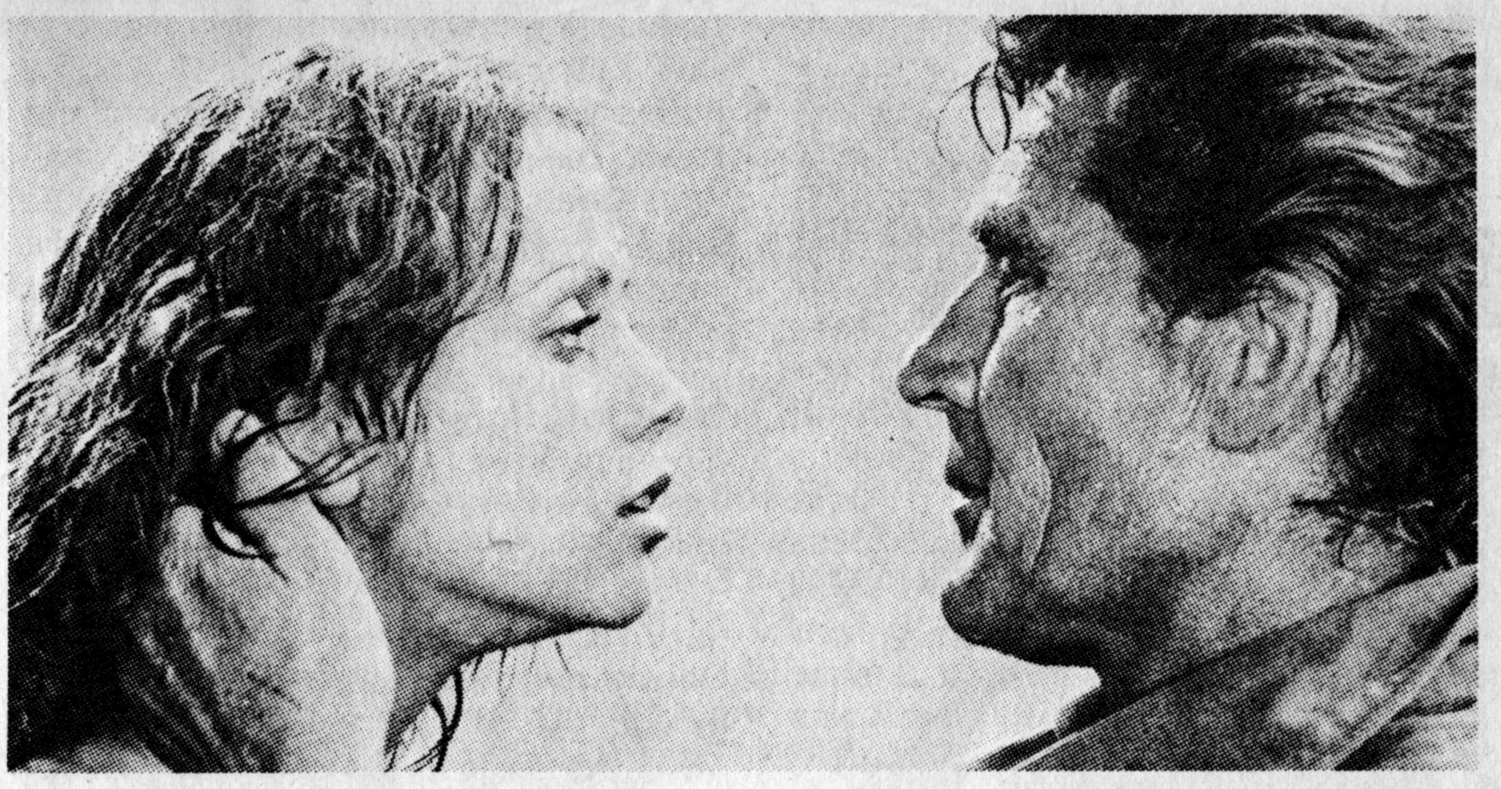
unions, starring Jean Lajeunesse, Pierre Theriault and Roger Lebel, produced by Jean-Claude Lefebvre's firm — Cinak — for fall release); Ray Bentley's **Valley of the Vanishing Men** (a Vancouver-produced feature-length documentary about the region of the Nahanni River); John Wright's **Unquiet House** (this $95,000 Calgary-produced feature stars Pia Shandel and Eric Peterson, and was both directed and produced by Wright, who is an assistant drama professor at the University of Calgary); Jean Dansereau's **Floralie, ou es-tu?*** (from the novel by Roch Carrier, budget of about $300,000); and finally Walter Baczynsky's **Marichka*** (produced by Oshawa-based Canukr Productions, the film is in Ukrainian).

Two films mentioned last time seem definitely to have fallen through — Don Owen's **Rosedale Lady** and Eric Till's **La Guerre, Yes Sir** (but see below for other developments concerning this property). In Toronto, Jack Cunningham was to have started shooting last month on **Peep*** (a drama of "repressed violence and sexuality"), but so far nothing has been heard. At least one film begun some fair time ago is still, apparently, being worked on: Gordon Sheppard's **Eliza's Horoscope*** (which was to have been at Cannes in 1971, and on which some re-shooting was apparently done a couple of months back).

Among features that have recently gone into production are: Raphael Lévy's **Maggie** (formerly known as **Pierre et Laura**; this is a Canadian-French co-production and stars Bruce Robinson, Louise Marleau and Janet Edis); André Forcier's **Bar Salon*** (one of the under $100,000 features aided by special CFDC grants — others similarly assisted have been **Tu brules, tu brules, Peep**, and the new films by Lynch, Markson, Malenfant, Bouchard, Lefebvre and Cousineau); Michel Bouchard's ACPAV-produced **Blanc Noel*** (on which shooting has now stopped to await spring); Jean-Pierre Lefebvre's **On n'engraisse pas les cochons à l'eau claire*** (a portrait of an undercover policeman at work on a college campus); and finally Jean Cousineau's **L'Ile Jaune*** ("The trials of a man and woman living on an island harassed by the forces of law and order. They escape to the city.").

In the category of films that will be going into production soon, we have: **Funzy and the Holy Name Society**, a comedy directed by, starring, and co-written (with Vancouverite Joseph Cavelli) by Ben Gazzara (to start shooting in May); **The Off Note**, a story about homosexuality, to be directed by Steve Postal and starring Danielle Ouimet, John Hamelin and Ruth Roman; **Welcome to Arrow Beach**, a $500,000 feature to be produced by Vancouver's Gary Conway and Steve North, and directed by (and starring) Laurence Harvey; Paul Lynch's **The Hard Part Begins*** (a few days in the life of a country-and-western singer); Morley Markson's **Killing Time*** ("a tragi-comedy of four persons"); Robbie Malenfant's **Moss Tarts*** (the story of a couple of teenage girls in the Ontario bush); Denis Héroux's latest, **Je t'aime** (starring Jeanne Moreau); and finally Gilles Carle's latest, the $475,000 production (CFDC involvement still uncertain) **Les corps celestes (Heavenly Bodies).**

Faustine et le bel été



And — to complete the survey — here are some projects still in the formative stage: Montreal's Host Productions (finishing off **The Pyx**) have bought the screen rights to Booker Bradshaw's *All the Flowers are Mine;* David Gil (of **Joe**), in association with Montreal's Richard Hellman and Michael Costom, has acquired screen rights to the novel *Schmucks,* a comedy by Canadian Seymour Blicker (by the way, has Costom bought some of Pierre Lamy's interest in Les Productions Carle-Lamy?); Parry Sound's Postal-Tele-Science Productions (about to start on **The Off Note**) are talking about a two-million-dollar production of D. H. Lawrence's **The Rainbow** to star Sharon Kirk, Danielle Ouimet, Nanette Newman, Pamela Tiffin and Carol Lynley; Ted Kotcheff is to start, this fall, shooting the John Kemeny-produced film version of Mordecai Richler's **The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz***; director Peter Pearson and producer John Bassett Jr. are awaiting CFDC approval before going ahead on **The Shoot**; Sandy Howard, who produced **A Man Called Horse, Man in the Wilderness**, and — most recently — **The Neptune Factor**, is about to produce two more films in Canada with "name" stars; and with the Eric Till-directed version of **La Guerre, Yes Sir** having been rejected investment by the CFDC (who are rumoured to have preferred a lower-budget production of the Carrier novel, hopefully with a French-Canadian director), producer Lester Persky is apparently attempting, now, to put together another production of the film, high-lighted by a truly international cast. More next issue.

WOMEN IN FILM

The Women's Film Event
at the Edinburgh Festival

Dear Barbara,

Now that we're settled back in Canada I can think about the Women's Film Event. The best part of the festival for me was the arrangement, with the screenings in Film House and the bar upstairs where everyone could meet & talk all the time in between. Great to meet other women who are involved in film/feminism, & then to work together on the film for BBC-TV. You should have been there when we were editing in London — Midge Mackenzie directed, but most decisions were made collectively by about six of us (some from the London Women's Film Group), & the lone man who did the cutting (union) didn't quite know how to react. That experience, of meeting & talking with the other women, made the festival for me & that's the context for most of my feelings about the films. I can't remember now what you saw, but I'll tell you about the ones I think you missed, and which I liked.

Nina Companeez's **Faustine et le bel été** — all sun-dappled, pastoral, rack-focused, flowered lovelies. Most of the people I talked to disliked it, & the prettiness of its surface seemed to be the reason. I saw a couple of men critics leave as soon as the Chopin/Liszt music credit rolled up, and Midge Mackenzie made one of the most generous comments from the women: that it looked as if it had taken Companeez ten years to get a chance to make it, & that as a woman director Midge understood how that can happen but she still didn't like it. I thought it was shallow at first, but like Varda's **Le Bonheur**, it's pretty complex and tough at the centre.

I quite liked Vera Chytilova's **The Fruit of Paradise**. Its formal complexity is dazzling, with its crime novel structure, modern classical cantata score, biblical

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& political allegory, ballet & colour compositions, symbolical plot & characters, plus the new analysis of the temptation of Eve. All that kept my head reeling with wonder and delight, but there was something unsatisfying about it for me. I can find a possible explanation in biographical information (from Josef Skvorecky's marvelous book, *All the Bright Young Men and Women*). Chytilova is apparently a militant feminist, beautiful & aggressive, out of favour with the new Czech government not only for her formalism but for her politics (had you heard that she was refused a visa to go to Japan to film, & that this movie is banned in Czechoslovakia?), employs her husband as cameraman, and works very closely with writer / designer Ester Krumbachova (who also worked on **Daisies**). Krumbachova is also beautiful, elegantly feminine and *anti-feminist*, and loves the Bible! I can only think that the contradictions there must have been in that team somehow showed up in the movie. They're working separately now, Chytilova with another woman on a story about a 19th century feminist, and Krumbachova has made her own film, **The Murder of Engineer Devil**. I'm anxious to see Chytilova's next film — if it ever gets made or shown.

I think you missed **In Six Easy Lessons**, which was fun. It's another of the Colette scripts directed by Jacqueline Audry, and you can guess it's a nice commercial soufflé. I was delighted by its mincing slickness, and by its off-the-cuff analysis of women's position in society. A common tart is "taught" to be an elegant courtesan, and each lesson underlines the expectations & myths about women, the social, moral, & economic role they play, as well as reminding us that these things are all conditioned. Before the lessons, Ginette & her lover are free & equal — there's one exhilarating scene where they argue and he smacks her, but instead of melting into tears as women are meant to do, she hits him back & they have a pretty good bout — nice to see for a change. After she learns to be "a woman" she's a prisoner, like Lola Montes in the cage.

I was most excited by the old movies, because I'd been longing to see them for years. Dorothy Arzner's **Dance Girl Dance** knocked everyone out, I think, and so did Leontine Sagan's **Madchen in Uniform**, and Germaine Dulac's **The Smiling Madame Beudet**. Leni Riefenstahl's **The Blue Light** was wonderful, mystical & mythical, with Riefenstahl playing the young girl who is reviled and persecuted by the men of the village because she has powers and knowledge that they don't have. Terrific scenes contrasting the men sitting together in groups in the village, drinking or doing business, & her wandering alone on the mountainside. The settings and lighting were magical.

Then the documentaries were good to

see together, though they've been pretty widely shown. I was glad to see Midge's **Women Talking**, especially with Millett's **Three Lives**, which clearly derives from Midge's film. And the shorts & cartoons & political teaching films ....

All in all, I thought it was a grand week of terrific movies. Write soon & tell me what you thought of it.
Love, Kay

Dear Kay,

As you know I too have a thing about the influence of physical and mental surroundings on one's sense of films, and of course knowing who the director is, what sex, what her or his preconceptions are likely to be. Not the intentional fallacy at all, as one of the men at the Festival suggested to me, but simply a sense of perspective. I also liked meeting and working with other women, and had a fair glow of satisfaction when I saw the TV programme and realized the women's part was so very much better done than the rest.

But there was another aspect of context at Edinburgh which I can best define by comparing it with the New York Women's Film Festival. If I can move for a bit to my diary, this is how I experienced it:

Monday p.m., Aug. 22: The Scotsman film critic announces, "Lynda Myles has organized a woman's session: it sounds a humourless idea." Humourlessly, I rush to Film House the next day to meet Lynda Myles, Claire Johnston, and Laura Mulvey, co-organizers of the Women's Film Event. They are friendly and anxious to talk. Working on less than a shoestring, unable to invite women directors, handicapped by distributors' refusals to donate screenings, by non-cooperation of Hungary and U.S.S.R., they were limited, finally, to showing what they could get. A far cry from the New York women's opportunity to screen 500 films by women to select the 30 programs they showed in June.

Comparison of Edinburgh with New York: New York was wholly a women's event, with a theatre of its own, panel discussions and press conferences, two solid weeks of films by women directors, day-time audiences of mostly women, chance after chance to meet the women you'd dreamed of, a good deal of professional elitism. Edinburgh was a women's event sandwiched in between slices of woolly white chauvinism and wry male "feminism." Revolutionary theory and blatant examples of the prevailing system. Educational in its own context? I don't think so.

Events of the Edinburgh Film Festival:
Retrospective of films by Douglas Sirk and Curtis Harrington.
Premieres of films by John Huston, Claude Chabrol, Joseph Losey, Samuel Fuller, Miklos Jancso, and some lesser-known directors.
A women's event: films directed by women.
A third week of "politkino."

These juxtapositions had no discernible impact on people's thinking, to judge from audience reaction, overheard discussions, and press response. No inclination to question the auteur approach to films. No questioning of the chauvinistic content of the premiered films. And virtually no willingness among men to examine women's films on their own terms (witness your account of the men leaving **Faustine** during the credits, and general critical mis-apprehension of Varda's films).

Well, perhaps sandwiching is a good idea as it makes for greater appreciation of the meaty bit. Certainly the anger aroused by Fuller's **Dead Pigeon on Beethoven Street** was sauce to the satisfaction of the very different violence in **Dance Girl Dance**, where that glorious fight between Lucille Ball and Maureen O'Hara demolishes the image of O'Hara as a demure maiden and leads to a satisfying reconciliation between two women who would struggle underhandedly to the death in the male-directed cinema. And certainly my anger at Britishly-expressed male attitudes at the festival was offset by working with women on the programme and taking part in the women-only discussion the last day. Such a meeting

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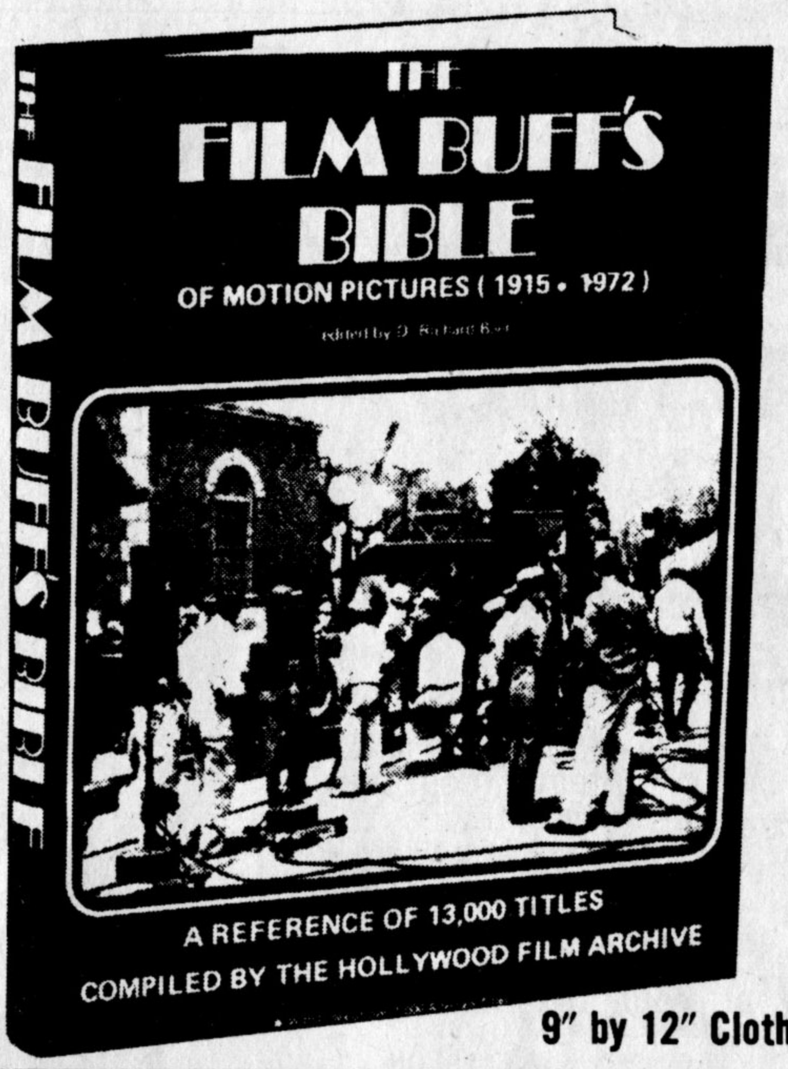

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at the New York festival would have been a welcome change from the public forums where lengthy male opinions too often dominated. So much was said in our group, and we were left longing for more time to discuss old questions of politics and art, documentary and fiction, clarity and subtlety — old questions transformed by the new element of women's art.

All right already.

Love, Barbara

Kay Armatage and Barbara Martineau

ENDLESS MOVIE

The Black Shadow Awards for Excellence in Moving Pictures: 1972

I'd better explain how these awards work. All the films noted below were seen, by me, for the first time in 1972. Some of them have been around for a few years; others are "official" 1972 releases.

For openers, my ten-best list (in alphabetical order):

THE BURGLARS (dir. Henri Verneuil)
CLAIRE'S KNEE (dir. Eric Rohmer)
DELIVERANCE (dir. John Boorman)
THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE (dir. Luis Bunuel)
THE EMIGRANTS (dir. Jan Troell)
FRENZY (dir. Alfred Hitchcock)
THE LAST MOVIE (dir. Dennis Hopper)
LETTER TO JANE (dir. Jean-Luc Godard & Jean-Pierre Gorin)
TOKYO STORY (dir. Yasujiro Ozu)
A VERY CURIOUS GIRL (or DIRTY MARY) (dir. Nelly Kaplan)

The Close-But-No-Cigar-Award goes to five films this year: **Chato's Land** (dir. Michael Winner), **Fat City** (dir. John Huston), **Hannie Caulder** (dir. Burt Kennedy), **Junior Bonner** (dir. Sam Peckinpah), and **The Unholy Rollers** (dir. Vernon Zimmerman).

Max Schreck Award for Best Horror Film: **Dr. Phibes Rises Again** (dir. Robert Fuest)

Torn Curtain Award for Worst Film of the Year by a Good Director: **Ten Day Wonder** (dir. Claude Chabrol)

Howard Hawks Award for Best "Old" Film Seen This Year: **Pandora's Box** (dir. G. W. Pabst)

Henri Langlois Award for Service to Students of Film History: Nelly Kaplan, for her documentary **Abel Gance**

Cinematheque Francaise Award for Over-All Creativity in Motion Picture Exhibition and Programming: Tom Luddy, Program Director of the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley. (This is the third year running that Luddy has won the Cinémathèque Française Award, so he gets to keep it; we'll start a new award next year.)

Maria Montez Award for Best Achievement in Camp: Curtis Harrington, for **What's the Matter With Helen?**

Keep on Keepin' on Award for Continuing Achievement: Luis Bunuel, for **Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie**

Special Marshall McLuhan Award for Best Film-For-TV: **Kung Fu** (the 90-minute pilot) (dir. Jerry Thorpe)

Special Open Love Letter Award: Louise Brooks, for **Pandora's Box, Diary of a Lost Girl**, and **A Girl In Every Port**

Special Moving Camera Award: Michael Snow, for **La Region Centrale**

Bernard Hermann Award for Best Music: Curtis Mayfield, for the **Superfly** score

Billy Bitzer Award for Creative Cinematography: Vilmos Szigmond, for **Deliverance**

Ben Hecht Award for Excellence in Screen Writing: James Dickey, for **Deliverance**

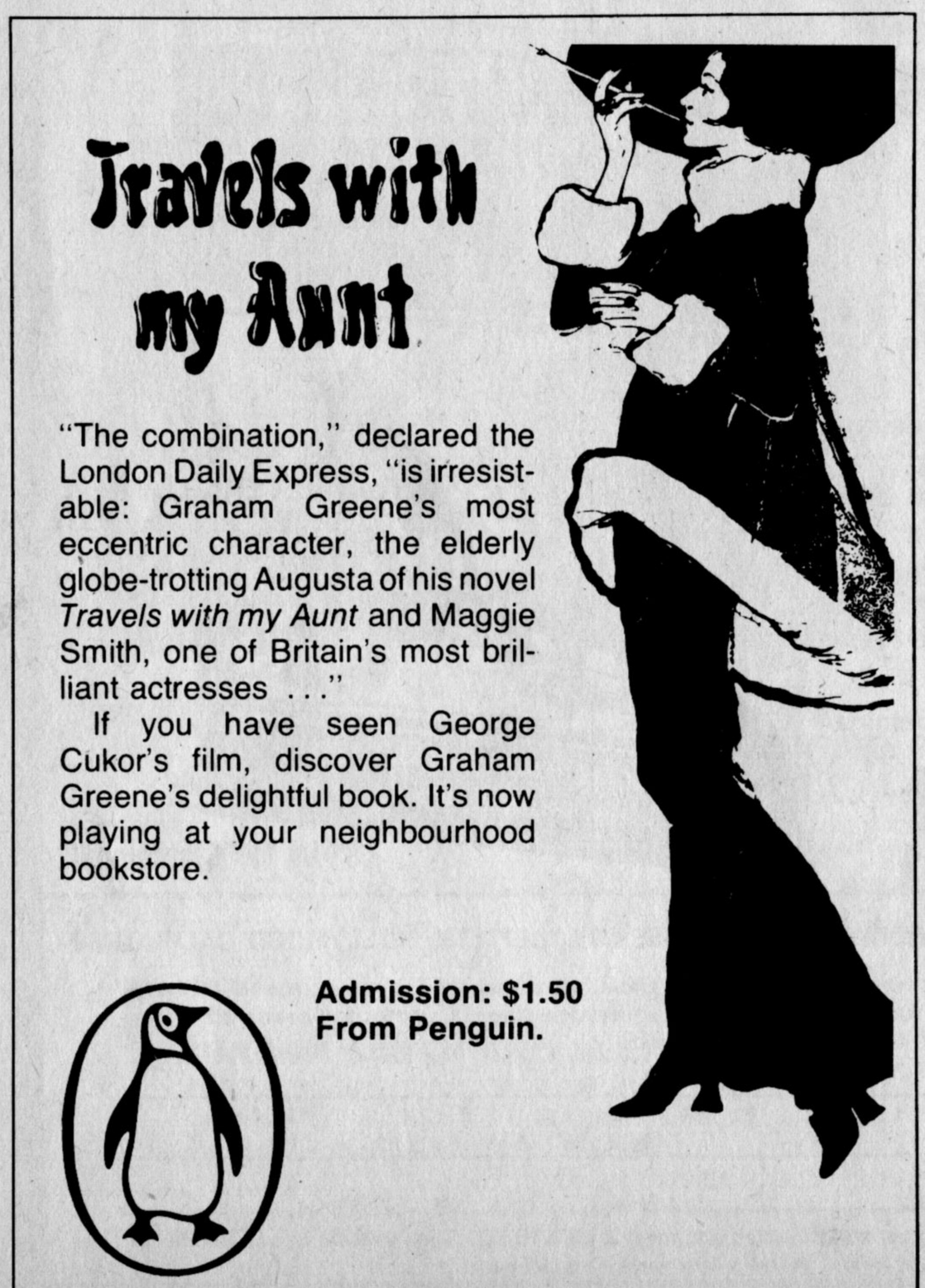
Best Performance by an Actress: A dead heat between Cicely Tyson (for **Sounder**) and Susan Tyrrell (for **Fat City**)

Best Performance by an Actor: Stacy Keach, for **Fat City**

Best Director: John Boorman, for **Deliverance**

Best Film of 1972: **Deliverance**

Michael Goodwin



"The combination," declared the London Daily Express, "is irresistable: Graham Greene's most eccentric character, the elderly globe-trotting Augusta of his novel *Travels with my Aunt* and Maggie Smith, one of Britain's most brilliant actresses . . ."

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A FILM MAKER'S COLUMN

by Leonard Lipton

A

As it happens, I wrote the first article about the super-8 system by anyone who had actually handled cameras, projectors, or the then-top secret cartridge. At the time I was a photographic journalist, which is not to be confused with a photojournalist (one of these is a respectable occupation) and there's no way out of it; filmmaker though I am, I'm still writing.

And writing about photographic technology is a strange trip indeed. It's the competition that's so weird, I suppose. Much of the writing in the slick magazines sounds like manufacturer's PR — that's where magazines like *Filmmaker's Newsletter* or *Popular Photography* are at much of the time.

Although I've been working in 16mm for the past eight years, I recently started to work with super-8, which has naturally enough made me *think* about super-8. What I have had in mind specifically is super-8 sync sound. At present there are people working with weird hybrid setups combining 16mm mag film and super-8 picture, because 16mm mag film recorders exist in some quantity in many installations. Picture and track are then synched up using one of the readily available super-8 16mm synchronizers.

This is a stupid way to go, and the only excuse for it is that we're in a transitional period. Super-8, to maintain its peculiar advantages, should stay all super-8. Which leads me to a consideration of the obvious all super-8 system, which would consist of super-8 full coat mag film, and super-8 picture. As far as I know, super-8 full coat is not now commercially available as a regularly stocked item, but it could be, and undoubtedly will be, with just a little effort on the part of 3M, for example.

I've been considering the matter from the middle, from the point of view of editing. Before editing we have shooting, and after editing, display, or projection. I'd prefer the term "display" because I'm certain that the future of super-8 sound film is also tied in with TV display, using simply operated cartridge videophonographs.

Before I turn my attention to shooting super-8 lip sync films, I want to say just a little more about the combination of super-8 picture and mag film. There is a tradition of various devices, some very sophisticated and clever, for synching 8mm or super-8 with tape — plain old quarter inch magnetic tape.

As far as shooting goes, this may be OK, and it's the way professionals do it in 16mm. But the 8mm tradition extends to editing tape and super-8 picture, and I'd like to help end this practice before it goes too far. People who would prefer to deal with tape, either electronically indexed or coded, or even perforated tape, deserve the hassle they are in for. There is nothing as simple to work with as two pieces of film — one picture, one sound track — because you can work with the damn stuff with your hands and readily see what you're doing. A synchronizer may seem like a primitive device to some, but it's unsurpassable for editing ease at low cost.

On to shooting. There's a lot to be said for super-8 single system. Single system is very important because it has the greatest potential for verité recording, the equivalent of what for literature has been dubbed "new journalism." Single system has this great potential because it can be run by one person, something rather tricky to work out for double system (which usually involves a camera and a recorder operator). The relationship between the subject or subjects and filmmaker is greatly simplified if a crew isn't needed for filming.

I know of two regular production super-8 cameras using single system. More properly, as I write these words, they are on the verge of being offered in the market place. One is the Fuji single-8 ZS400, which accepts the Fuji single-8 cartridge. Remember, the film format is the same as super-8, it's the cartridge design that differs. The amazing thing about the Fuji camera is that it uses optical sound on film! Now this is something I would never have expected anybody to try, but here it is. And super-8 optical sound certainly could have a lot going for it. Most important is the fact that the sound heads in all super-8 optical sound machines use photoelectric cells sensitive to the full spectrum of visible light, so that dye tracks are perfectly acceptable. This isn't the case for 16mm projectors, and labs have to go to great lengths to make colour soundtracks sufficiently opaque for the cells in use in most projectors.

The other super-8 sound on film

Lenny Lipton is the author of Independent Filmmaking. *He was the film columnist for* The Berkeley Barb *during its first four years of publication. He has made 18 films, and wrote "Puff, the Magic Dragon." He is far out.*

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31 min. col. 1971. $350 $25
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machine on the verge of introduction is the Wilcam W1. Wilcam is the outfit known for their modification of the Minolta D10 to a single system super-8 machine. The W1, which I saw in prototype, is probably the most elegant single system machine, surpassing anything I've seen in 16mm, simply because it incorporates within its body both power supply and amplifier.

The machine has very respectable specifications for magnetic recording on prestriped 8mm wide super-8 stock, which is contained in 200 foot internally loaded magazines. Although the camera I saw lacked auto threading, I was told that the production models will thread the film through the gate, past the sound heads, and back into the takeup side of the coaxial cartridge. The W1 is of the same general configuration as the silent running Eclair ACL, and to my ear it runs quieter. In case you're thinking of rushing out and buying a couple, let me warn you I'm talking about a $5000 machine.

Next issue: Super-8 double system recording, or a daring trick!

Lenny Lipton

HOLLYWOOD IS OUR BEAT

Hal Aigner and Michael Goodwin

Rage (dir. George C. Scott): Get your rocks off as George C. Scott takes on the entire military-industrial complex — and wins — in this taut, unpretentious thriller. It's not realistic, but it's the best wish-fulfillment flick we've seen in a long time. (★★★)

Sounder (dir. Martin Ritt): Filled, as it was, with poverty, racial abuse, and plain hard times, a black sharecropper's life was tough in the '30s. Nonetheless, as **Sounder** would have it, it was also filled with quiet dignity and rich satisfactions. In short, it's the liberal myth of virtuous poverty brought to the screen once again. Fortunately, high technical skill, able photography and all-around fine acting override the sociological simplification to create a piece of top-quality entertainment. (★★★)

Prime Cut (dir. Michael Ritchie): Fearing the worst, we've taken our time getting around to **Prime Cut** — but it turns out to be a lot better than it looks. Dreamlike ambience, beautiful photography, and an essentially random plot add up to more than just another slice-of-violence. **Prime Cut**'s underlying consistency and fatalistic point of view make it one of the few legitimate *films noirs* to come from Hollywood in recent years. (★★½)

The Getaway (dir. Sam Peckinpah): After the relatively sedate **Junior Bonner**, Sam is once again serving up tasty tidbits of violence seasoned with suggestions of moral insight. While there are a number of interesting sequences, they fail to ameliorate the basic shallowness of the main characters. (★★)

Hit Man (dir. George Armitage): Badly hurt by a nearly indecipherable soundtrack, and a stiff performance by its male lead, **Hit Man** still has flashes of cinematic brilliance. Pam Grier is a knockout in the female lead, and Los Angeles never looked more Chandleresque. (★★)

Jeremiah Johnson (dir. Sydney Pollack): Although it's not a *bad* movie, this mountain man saga suffers from choppy construction, and an unconvincing lead performance by Robert Redford. Nonetheless, the glorious Rocky Mountains are a delight to the eye, the Indians are diverse and fully characterized, and the supporting characters (particularly Will Geer) are a joy (★★)

REFLECTIONS ON THE CURRENT SCENE

by Herman G. Weinberg

"Something old, something new . . . ."

I saw King Vidor's old **Wild Oranges** again recently, and the old magic that once recalled Conrad's "bits of strange coasts under the stars" from *Nostromo* is still there. And I saw the new Bunuel, **The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie**, which devastatingly satirizes that same bourgeoisie which both Kubrick and Fellini cater (nay, pander) to in **Clockwork Orange** and **Fellini Roma**. Bunuel still makes films for an intellectual aristocracy in a medium that has always, for the most part, found it profitable merely to *épater le bourgeoisie*. The *Christian Science Monitor* reports a *N.Y. Times* dispatch anent the Fellini film that Romans had a hard time recognizing their city and themselves in it, but adds: "It will go over big in America . . . is the consensus." Which perhaps, adds the *Monitor*, says a great deal about civilizations.

As for the new Godard-Gorin, **Tout Va Bien**, it's certainly not for the bourgeoisie (though it would "do them good"), being a call to revolution in terms of Marxist-Maoist ideology. "There are no film clas-

Herman G. Weinberg has contributed articles to most of the world's leading film journals, served on the juries of various film festivals, been US correspondent for Sight & Sound *as well as* Cahiers du Cinéma, *and published several books on the cinema.*

sics," once expounded Godard, "there are only capitalist films and revolutionary films." What looks like a constructivist setting, but isn't, gives the proceedings (about a strike) a Brechtian air. There is also an astonishing (for Godard) image, a brazenly explicit sexual moment that makes one think that if "youth must have its fling" (*vide* what the youngsters are getting away with now, Kubrick, Bertolucci in the incredible **Last Tango in Paris**, etc.) what is Fellini, who's old enough to know better, doing in that company? Only Bunuel, mellow with the wisdom of years, maintains the integrity of the artist on the highest moral and aesthetic plane. There is not a second of explicit sex in his film, which is as much a part of its mastery as anything else in it. I shudder to think what his opinion of Bertolucci's **Tango** would be. What would Chekhov have thought of it? The Chekhov of *Uncle Vanya,* which the Russians recently sent over in an elegaic film by Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky, the Chekhov who said more with one line on the subject of sex in *Uncle Vanya* than the entire caboodle of convulsive "Spanish fly" on the recent screen: "A woman can be a man's friend only when, after first being an acquaintance, she becomes his mistress. Only then can she become his friend."

All of which leaves me just room to bring to your attention a most excellent and useful double-volumed book, Georges Sadoul's classic *Dictionary of Films* and *Dictionary of Filmmakers*, translated, edited and updated by Peter Morris, that the enterprising University of California Press has just brought out. Even in French I found them the books I more frequently consulted for film facts than any others in my library. Now that they are in English, and brought up to date, they are more valuable than ever. Sadoul was a highly reliable historian in a field that the French, with a hallowed reputation as encyclopaedists, have long since made their own. And Peter Morris does justice to his material, even when he has revised some entries. (Some entries have also been added.) In any case, anyone who undertakes such a documentation must tread treacherous shoals and hazard all sorts of possible challenges, since the volumes present critical and historical appraisals as well as facts. These may differ from the reader's assessment, but therein, reminds Mr. Morris, lies the books' added dimension — that they are more than just a compendium of facts, which make the volumes that much more interesting. But it's more than that. So interestingly are Sadoul's and Morris's entries defined and annotated that even when the reader finds himself facing an assessment different from his own, the authors invariably offer one of such catholicity as to intrigue him into (possibly) reconsidering his own opinion. On all counts, highly recommended.

BOOKS

Audiovisual Market Place 1972-1973, J. A. Neal (ed.), R. R. Bowker Co. (P.O. Box 1807, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106). $17.50.

This is the fourth edition of what has got to be the most comprehensive buying guide and source book of information on the entire audio-visual field. Different sections of this large-format 293-page book list the producers and distributors of AV material, the manufacturers of equipment, associations in the field, educational radio and tv stations, reference works, periodicals covering the area, plus a calendar of upcoming exhibits and conferences. Certainly well worth the investment for anyone either in the AV business itself or for anyone — like most educators these days — who is a heavy user of AV materials.

E. Anderson

The New York Times Film Reviews, 1913-1970, a One-Volume Selection by George Amberg. Arno Press /Quadrangle Books. 495 pages. $12.50.

Last year Arno Press published a seven-volume set priced at $495 which allowed the proud purchaser to read the complete *N. Y. Times* film reviews from 1913 through 1970. If you can't spare the change nor the time to peruse 18,835 reviews, you might prefer this collection, narrowed down to a manageable 400 by film historian George Amberg.

Amberg, in his introduction, agrees with such critics as Rex Reed about the minimal influence a critic has in affecting a film's potential audience. "As often as not," Amberg notes, "the vast moviegoing population makes its own choices, guided by such factors as word-of-mouth, predilection for a star or director, established reputation on the stage or in print," among other things. And he debunks the myth that the critic is a frustrated artist who has failed. Amberg views the critic as "a dedicated artist who has succeeded . . . his chosen metier is as valid and exhaustive a vocation as the artist's."

With these thoughts in mind, he presents the reviews — reproduced directly from newsprint — in six sections, each about a decade long. He precedes each section with an essay outlining the underlying currents of the period. For instance, in "The Roaring Twenties" he tells us of Hollywood's emergence as the film capital, of superstars, dictatorial studio heads, the Hays censorship office, and the nation's changing lifestyle.

The book begins with an April, 1913 news article (there weren't reviews yet) on the opening of **Quo Vadis?** at the Astor Theatre. Reviews were unsigned until the mid-'20s, when Mordaunt Hall began writing under the boxed caption "The Screen." The collection ends with Vincent Canby's appraisal of **The Confession** by Costa-Gavras: "Vastly more interesting than **Z**."

The reviews themselves are not discussed here because that seems to be carrying out the process too far, i.e., a review of a review of a film. As a whole, though, the reviews are worthwhile as history, and economical for those who would rather read about old films than pay to see new ones.

David Batterson

The American Newsreel 1911-1967, by Raymond Fielding. University of Oklahoma Press. $9.95 hardcover.

Until the day when we see a *History of World Cinema in Twenty Volumes* sitting proudly on the shelves of our neighbourhood bookstore, books like ***The American Newsreel***, dealing with this rather minor aspect of the total cinema scene, remain of great interest. Despite the increasing rate at which books on cinema are dropping from the trees, histories are rare, and histories that attempt to be definitive are almost nonexistent.

Fielding's book manages to be academically respectable (with almost 100 pages of bibliography and index), minutely (sometimes boringly) comprehensive — and yet does not leave out any of the juicy bits, the pretty and not so pretty pictures and the showbiz gossip. It is a sad book to read: "The newsreel never really bloomed at all. Like some species of the hardy cactus plant it had simply sustained itself from year to year — a symbiotic marvel, unnourished and unchanged by the dynamic environment in which it has always been rooted."

Distributors and exhibitors tolerated the newsreel; that "series of catastrophes ended by a fashion show," because audiences expected it, along with their popcorn, as part of the total movie experience. But they tolerated it only if it behaved itself. Said one magazine of the '30s, "Newsreels have an obligation . . . to be entertaining. They have no obligation to be important (or) informative. [They should be mindful of the] proprieties of theatrical presentation, and not contain controversial political material which is calculated to destroy the theatre as the public's escape from the bitter realities, the anguishes and the turmoil of life." The motion picture exhibitors of the '40s have become the TV station managers of the '70s, but broadcasters have come to realize that a good riot can sell tooth paste as effectively as anything. Still, strongly opinionated reporting is largely taboo, and true controversy rarely breaks the soothing nightly hum.

David Batterson, filmmaker and former book reviewer for the Tulsa Sunday World, *now resides in San Francisco.*

2021

The highlight of the American newsreel, **The March of Time**, a series which ran from 1935 to 1951, was more of an in-depth, dramatized documentary than a newsreel. "Its style was revolutionary, a curious mixture of cinematic exposition and journalistic punctuation that defied both convention and analysis." **The March of Time** was irresponsible journalism at its best. Among other deceptions, it frequently used impersonators of celebrities when real footage was unavailable. "The static camera and nervous editing, the vox e sepulchro strained with alarm, the posture of omniscience and the calculated air of fearlessness — all combined to delight contemporary audiences otherwise bored with the inanities of intermission travelogues and farces."

The March of Time is interesting in the same way that yellow journalism is, not because of its substance, but because of its form, something which Grierson considered "basically necessary to the comprehension of our time. Something affects something. Someone is relative to someone." It is this dramatic model which offers us a hope of breaking out of our myths of individualism and personal achievement into the realities of collective life which, like it or not, we are all dependent upon. The failure of the newsreel, like that of television, is a failure to underline the meaningful patterns behind the chaos of everyday events. "Among the foundation stones, the pompous parades, the politicians on pavements . . . it is difficult to think that any real picture of our troubled day has been recorded. The newsreel has gone dithering on, mistaking the phenomenon for the thing itself, and ignoring everything that gave it the trouble of conscience and penetration and thought."

Ronald Blumer

Hastings House (10 East 40th St., N.Y.C. 10016) has just brought out a revised, third edition of one of Fielding's earlier works — still a classic in the field — ***The Technique of Special Effects Cinematography*** (425 pp., $18.50). Comprehensive, readable, a virtual encyclopedia of laboratory and in-the-camera effects.

The Cinema of John Ford, by John Baxter. Tantivy / Zwemmer / Barnes. International Film Guide Series. 90 pages. $2.95; Canada: $3.95.

Considering John Ford's massive reputation, there has been surprisingly little writing in book form on his vast body of work. John Baxter's stimulating and perceptive study should find a ready space on enthusiasts' shelves, next to the invaluable interview book compiled by Peter Bogdanovich. (Perhaps because of the detailed filmography included in the latter volume, Baxter's concludes with only a chronological list of Ford titles and a drastically select bibliography.)

Since John Ford has been, for twenty years, my own favourite director, I wear my reviewer's cap at a special angle on this occasion. There was nothing casual about my reading of Baxter's well-written arguments. Inevitably, I veered between mental shouts of joy when he was sensible (i.e., in agreement with me) and almost physical winces when he was foolish. The shouts were more frequent than the winces, and there was a third, and pleasurable, reaction when Baxter threw a genuine new light on Ford — something not easy to achieve with a subject approaching the stature of an ancient monument.

Baxter first questions the critical approach of the British magazine *Sequence:* "The enthusiastic essays in that magazine, mainly by Lindsay Anderson, that did much to revive waning interest in Ford's films, also set a critical tone that has survived to the '70s, often to Ford's detriment. At the cost of establishing him as a major figure of the cinema, *Sequence* doomed Ford to be judged almost entirely in terms of his interest in, and affection for, American rural life and for the West . . . ." The conviction beginning to be expressed in these sentences is as typical of Baxter as is the reasonable tone of expression. He is laudably more interested in objective criticism of Ford than in building up his own critical reputation at the expense of someone else's.

Baxter feels that Ford's films, in detailed consideration, are richer than a continued rehearsal of the themes which are common to them. He also suggests deeper and more ambivalent meanings to the themes than the principles of "duty," "honour," "patriotism," that are commonly accepted, sometimes with revulsion, by many reviewers. He realises that Ford is an enigma, and doesn't deny certain gaps between his life and his art. On Indians, for example: "Although his personal generosity to them is well known, he characterizes them in most of his films as supernatural savages, brutal, sadistic, as much devils as men."

The book does not attempt to cover all of Ford's films. Obviously, the author — like most of us — has seen few silents by Ford. In any case, he has a slightly hard time making a group out of **Cameo Kirby, North of Hudson Bay** and **Three Bad Men**. Most of his thirteen chapters group together two or more films, often very persuasively with the sound films, where genuine choice of comparison is involved. I am delighted to find **The Searchers** (one of Ford's best and most underrated films) so thoroughly appreciated. But Baxter spends too many lines comparing it with **Two Rode Together**, when the fact that the later film has resemblances to the earlier, but is inferior to it, could have been made quickly and let go. Also, Ford could scarcely have made **Two Rode Together** as a favour to Harry Cohn of Columbia, in 1961, when Cohn died in 1958. While I'm at it, what other nits shall I pick? I can't agree to any homosexual undertones in **My Darling Clementine**. I can't see that Jane Darwell is less than perfect as Ma Joad, even if Ford did want Beulah Bondi initially. And I'm mildly astonished at the statement that Ford has no interest in the Irish landscape. (Baxter's word is "disinterest" but nobody remembers the meaning of that word any more.)

Rather than dwell on inevitable disagreements, however, I would prefer to stress John Baxter's freshness of approach and his happy knack of combining visual and thematic analysis in the same paragraph (sometimes even the same sentence). Like the largely unfamiliar and revealing stills — many showing Ford at work — the text continually reasserts Ford's greatness and originality from several different angles. A long way from idolatry, it is a sincere tribute to a tough-minded, warm-hearted artist.

Clive Denton

Clive Denton is programme director of the Ontario Film Theatre.

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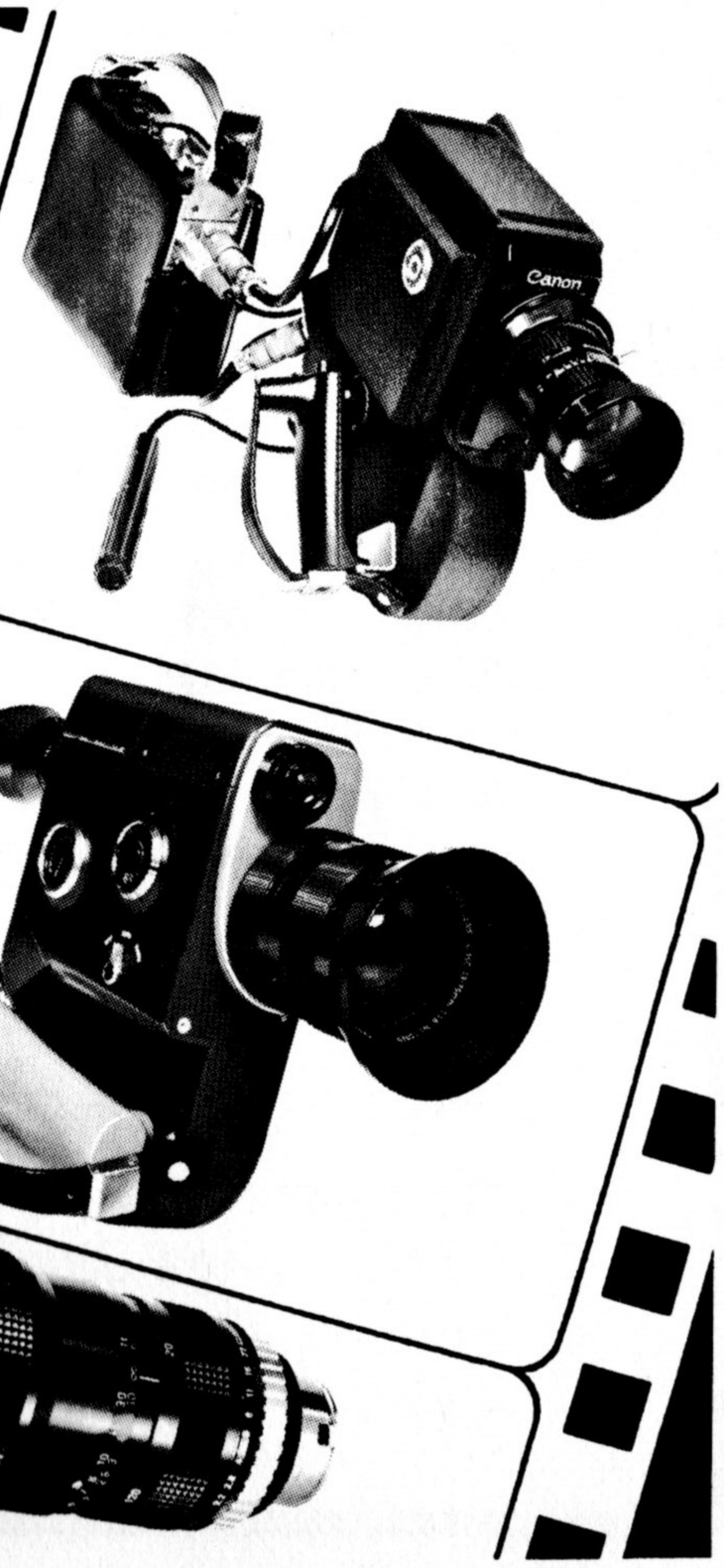

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